

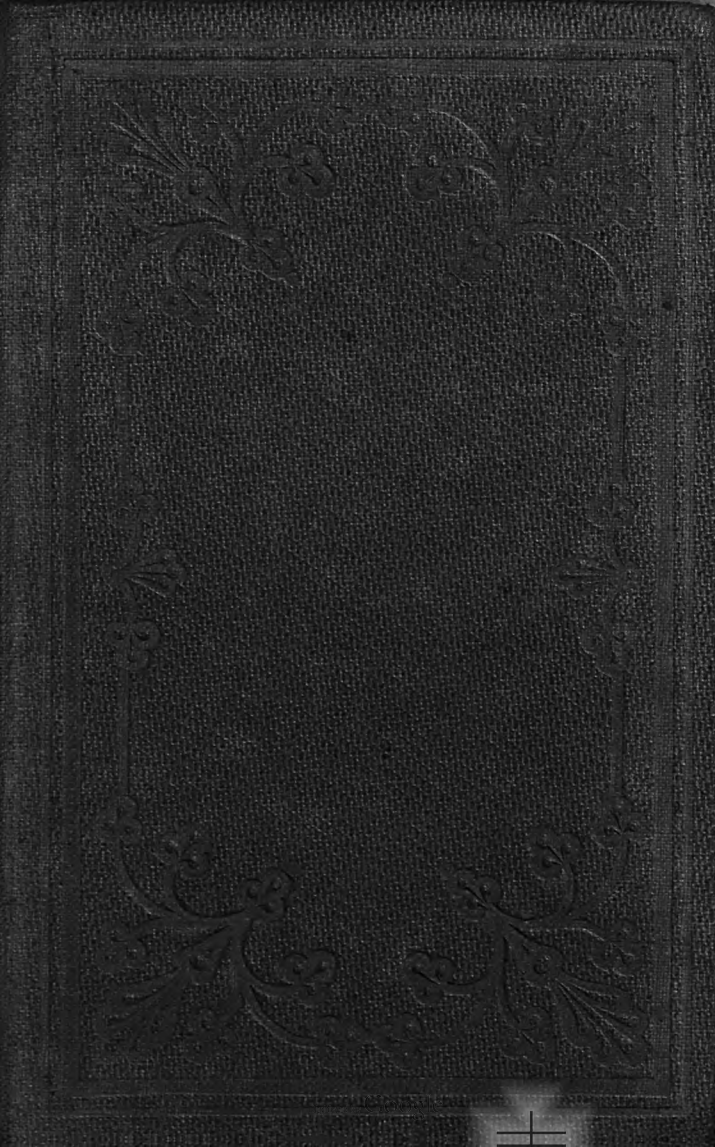
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**THE PATH OF THE JUST. .**



13

THE  
PATH OF THE JUST.

Tales of Holy Men and Children.

BY  
S. BARING-GOULD, B.A.,  
PROBATIONARY FELLOW OF S. NICOLAS COLL., SHORNHAM,  
AND ASSISTANT MASTER OF S. JOHN'S COLL.,  
HURSTPIERPOINT.

"THE PATH OF THE JUST IS AS THE SHINING LIGHT, THAT  
SHINETH MORE AND MORE UNTO THE PERFECT DAY."

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## ERRATA.

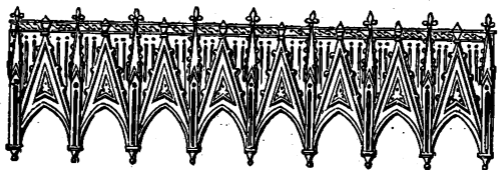
P. 56, l. 21, *for* Panhagia *read* Theotokos.

P. 111, l. 3, *for* Helogolander *read* Halogalander.



DEDICATED  
TO  
THE CHORISTERS OF S. BARNABAS'  
PIMLICO,  
IN MEMORY OF  
THEIR BROTHER J. E.,  
AT REST.





## Introduction.

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WAS standing one evening on the sea beach, and I looked out westward.

The tide was flowing off shore. The brim of the sun dipped in the sea, immediately a large blaze shot along the waters to my feet; and as I looked sun-ward it lay like a path of glory leading from the strand to it.

As I watched, thoughts came into my soul connected with that golden road; I thought how that it was made up of thousands and tens of thousands of ripples, the same sun in each, near my feet distinctly quivering in every tiny wave; but afar, one blaze of unspeakable light merging into the glorious orb.

I thought how that the path before me was

like the Holy Catholic Church, how that each wave lifting itself from the dim ocean, and catching the glory, was like one of the holy ones in that Church reflecting the light from the LAMB; and all together uniting unconsciously in forming that glittering way.

Then I seemed to understand what is meant by the words, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

The way before the just is glorious with the holy ones who have passed on before to the Sun of Righteousness, and they falling asleep in turn, the ripple of the ocean of time passes over them, and they join in making that path bright before others; that path crossing the troubled waves of this world, leading up to the golden doors of Heaven.

In this little book you will find stories of the victories some of these saints have won, some while yet children, triumphing over the world and the powers of darkness.

Now, what I wish, dear children of CHRIST, is, that when you read them, you may think how great and blessed a thing it is to belong to that Church which has produced so many saints, whose walls are cemented with the blood of so

many martyrs, being one from the time when CHRIST founded it, one in her faith, in her orders, in her sacraments, and one in her hope ; then remember to thank God in your hearts that your lot is fallen in that blessed fold where God is truly known.

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THE authorities for some of the stories I add.

For "The Drought at Gaza," the life of S. Porphyrius by his disciple Mark, see Tillemont, vol. x. The fall of the statue did not, however, occur on the same day as the storm, but the fact of its falling before the cross is the same.

The story of "The Altar Flowers" is from S. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, xxii. cap. 8. The dream, however, he does not mention, and I have supplied it from one which was vouchsafed in these times with a somewhat similar result.

"The Choristers of Carthage" is from Victor of Utica, *De Persec. Vandal. lib. iii.* ; he was a contemporary, and himself a confessor.

"The Story of SS. Ethelbert and Ethelred" is taken from Simeon of Durham, (*Hist. Reg. Ang.*) and Capgrave (*Nova Legenda Angliæ*, fol. 143.)

The account of "The Martyrs of Croyland" is from the chronicle of Ingulf of Croyland.

The story of "The Picture in the New Palace" may be found in the life of S. Methodius.

"The Rock of Thor," and "The Flight of Wild Fowl" are taken from the Kristni Saga, caps. i. and iv.

"The Escape of S. Magnus" is given in both the Orkneyinga Saga, and the Magnus Helga Saga, ii. et seq.

The authority for "The Sacrifice of Chichen-Itza" is Cogolludo, lib. v. cap. xii. The name of the place where it occurred is not, however, mentioned by him.

Some of these tales have already appeared in the *Churchman's Companion*.



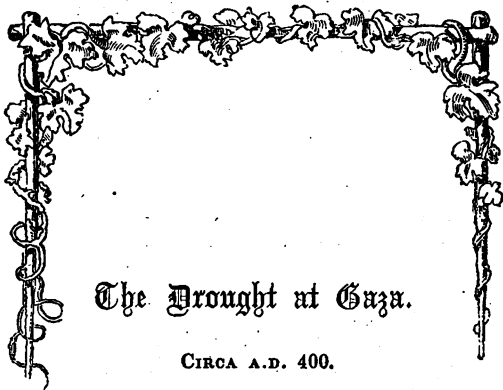


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## The Drought at Gaza.

CIRCA A.D. 400.



STILL deep blue sky,—not an air stirring, the palms were as if painted on the horizon, there was no motion in them, the distant Idumæan range was glowing an intense purple; there was not the least sparkle of water on the rounded stones which strewed the beds of the torrents seaming the sides of the neighbouring hills; even the deep blue sea flashed in its short listless waves like fire, leaving the beach in many places encrusted with the salt from its retreating ripples.

The air was intensely hot, quivering like that over a kiln, above the sky was almost painfully blue, hardly a relief to the eye tired with the glare of the white sand hills which lay about Gaza. The great temple of Marnas shone out also with its spotless white marble pillars against the sky, like a sail on the distant sea, and the

rich gilding of the capitals and cornice rivalled the sun in the glare it produced.

To the east were a few heaps of ruins, a few pillars standing about, and many lying on the ground, the only relics of the old town.

You can hardly conceive the furnace-like heat of the city, every wall under a vertical sun yielding no cool shadow, but rather a vivid glare of heat. The cisterns were dried up now, with nothing at the bottom but a heap of sand and a few dead eels.

The Marnon was the coolest place, with its wide porticoes and groves of white pillars almost creating a draught. The nave of the temple was somewhat after the Egyptian type, quite open in front, so that between the pillars which were painted beautifully with a profusion of white and blue, one could look up to the altar which sent up clouds of incense, and beyond to great Marnas himself, a huge idol gorgeously arrayed in purple sprinkled over with gold stars, having an eagle's head, the beak gilded and the eyes sparkling like precious stones, the right hand holding a bunch of gold darts, and the feet like those of a leopard.

In this temple continual sacrifice was being made, that Marnas might send showers on the parched soil, for the inhabitants of the city were dying in numbers from want of water, the little pasture fields and gardens on the hill slopes were burned to a brown hue, and beasts as well as men were perishing; moreover, a disease had broken out in the place, arising from the want

of moisture, the tongue swelled, and at length suffocated the stricken person, while the skin which had become hard and crisp, so that it cracked, was covered with blotches. This defied the doctors' skill, they said that the only remedy was water, and yet the sky continued as blue as ever, not a wind stirred. Sacrifices had been repeatedly offered to Marnas, but there was no answer.

This day was spent in making offerings of animals whose blood streamed from the altar into the gutter or drain round it in the marble floor.

"By the Twins, Claudius!" exclaimed a young citizen of the place, catching a friend by the end of his toga, as he was passing among the columns, "I thought you had to be at the port this time of day!"

"So I have, generally," answered he turning, "but these times are so changed to bad that methought I might turn in here and say a prayer to Marnas;—why my mare is dying!"

"I thought you were not much given to the gods, Claudius, at least not to our Marnas, but as you say, it behoves every honest man and citizen of Gaza, to use his best prayers, (if they are of any good,) for the sorry condition of the place. We must trust to the gods in this matter, in sickness I trust to my physician rather than to Esculapius; on a journey I give a broken wheel to be mended by a chariot maker or smith, and offer no fruitless vows to Vulcan. The gods help those who help themselves, but

helping ourselves is out of the question now, I wish we could say to that cistern

*Te flagrantis atrox hora Caniculæ  
Nescit tangere :''*

"You know the story, Taressus, of the short man who fell off a tall mare, of his own self he could not mount her, so falling on his knees he called on great Jove to assist him, then he sprang, but came no higher than the stirrups, whereupon he cried to the Earth Shaker, and leaped as high as the girth ; he called upon arrow-shaking Apollo with no better success ; he prayed to yellow Ceres, to Castor, to Mars, but for all that could not get into the saddle, then he fell to praying that all the gods together might assist him, and stepping back to make a great leap he sprang over the horse."

"For my part," said Taressus, laughing, "I am not sure but that this is a mark of their fury for the number of Nazarenes in the place."

"The Christians to the dogs!" exclaimed Claudius, "I could believe them to be the cause of it by their enchantments, only that they suffer as much as others in the drought."

"You heard how the oracles are put to silence by them," said Taressus, "there is always some trouble they are causing us."

"And the sect is gaining ground fast ; their new Bishop, may Mars confound him ! is making proselytes very fast, they say that he is most active in persuading them."

"They will not get many converts now," said

Taressus, "water is too scarce and expensive to be wasted in baptizing them; I only wish they were not allowed to go as free as they are; what is that—?"

As he spoke, a low sound of voices chanting sweetly was heard, the two friends went out to the flight of steps which led down into the square before the temple, and saw a procession advancing from the lower part of the town up the main street into the square. At the head went the acolythes in white, one carried a tall cross, and was followed by two Priests. Behind them came the Bishop Porphyrius, who had only been in Gaza six months, and was looked upon with great hatred by the heathens, for they felt that their religion was rapidly crumbling beneath the faith of the Crucified; and now especially the popular opinion was that the drought was a display of the anger of the gods against Gaza, for the number of proselytes which were made by the new Bishop.

After him came some more Priests, and then followed about two hundred and eighty people walking in order, chanting "De profundis" to one of those glorious old tones which thrill our hearts to the present day with a strange awe. Thus chanting as they went, the whole body passed out of the Hebron gate, and the surge-like swell of the music grew faint beyond the city walls.

"Those Christian dogs shall not enter this town again," said Claudius, vehemently, "at least not till we have rain; that will try their wonder-

ful prayers a little! I am captain of the gate, and shall have it closed directly. Ho! guard there! Felix! order the gates to be shut on that rascally crew, and mind they be not opened till we have rain."

The man to whom the message was given, laughed and went on his errand. Meanwhile the Christians with their Bishops and Priests had crossed a hot and arid bit of sand to the foot of some low hills where among the rocks the hard aloes with their strange horny leaves flourished. Here and there too were tufts of palms, and in one place a patch of withered vegetation showed the position of a dried spring. Hard by was the Church of S. Timothy, of plain oblong form, with only a rough cross of four equal arms cut into the stone over the door to distinguish it from any other building. It was a very small edifice with a flat roof, the eastern end had benches running round the walls, on which the Priests sat, the extreme east was occupied by the Bishop's stone chair; before it was a great stone block which served as an Altar; the remaining portion of the Church, was filled with people, divided into two divisions according to their sex, while the catechumens were kept without by the ostiarii or door-keepers.

After the Bishop had chanted a supplication for rain, all the people answering, Amen, he celebrated the Divine Mysteries while all the people lay with their faces reverently on the ground.

I will not describe their service, nor how they came back chanting in procession.

"Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish; they are black unto the ground, and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up.

"And their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters: they came to the pits, and found no water; they returned with their vessels empty; they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads.

"Because the ground is chapped, for there was no rain in the earth, the plowmen were ashamed, they cover their heads."

"Yea, the hind also calved in the field, and forsook it, because there was no grass.

"And the wild asses did stand in the high places, they snuffed up the wind like dragons; their eyes did fail, because there was no grass.

"O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do Thou it for Thy Name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against Thee. . . . O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldst Thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? Why shouldst Thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet Thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us and we are called by Thy Name; leave us not."

"Reverend Father!" whispered an acolyte, running up to the Bishop, "the city gates are closed, and they refuse to let us in till the rain comes."

"Let me forward and speak to them," said S. Porphyrius, leaving his place and advancing to the head of the procession, followed by many of the Priests.

"What meaneth this?" he cried out in a loud voice to the warder, "we are all true citizens, wherefore hast thou closed the gates on us?"

"Ah, Porphyrius!" exclaimed Claudius, from the top of the wall, "you have vexed this city beloved of the gods, by your enchantments, the great god Marnas, and Venus the world-subduer are wroth with it, for you have beguiled this people from the faith of their fathers, to worship an Ass's head."

"Nay!" exclaimed the Bishop, "speak not thus of our Holy Faith; this drought vexeth us as well as you,—we have even now been in solemn procession to supplicate the assistance of our gracious God for the sake of His dear Son JESUS, Whom thou revilest; and we doubt not that He will hear our prayer, and grant us what we need."

"Let Him help you now!" exclaimed Claudius, looking round at the walls which were crowded with the idolatrous population of Gaza, then turning to the Bishop he said in a loud voice,

"Never, till it rains, shall you enter these streets—see whether your God is greater than Marnas!"

The people on the wall gave a great shout, and some of the Christians looking round on the parched sandy tract about turned pale, some gazed doubtingly on the Bishop's face.

"So be it!" exclaimed he. "Follow me, my children;" and kneeling down on the hot sand, he prayed:

"Thou, O God, Who hearest the prayers of Thy servant Elijah, when he prayed that Thy gracious rains might descend upon the earth, assist us now in this our great strait, lest we perish in the wilderness from heat and lack of water. O, hear our prayer; let the voice of our crying come even into Thine ears. Wherefore do the heathen say, 'Where is now their God?' LORD, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us, and we shall be whole. Hear our cry, and through the Name of JESUS save us!"

As the Bishop prayed, a slight puff of hot wind stirred his grey hair. He remained there kneeling with all the people, now absorbed in private devotion. The heathen from the walls looked on in astonishment.

Far out to sea Claudius looked, and saw a dark spot on the pure blue waters, and a shadow stealing over them like a little cloud. And then came gradually a line of white foam, and a gust of wind swept suddenly on to the shore, and the wavelets sprang up it with a mimic roar. Then there rose a high cloud of sand which whirled round and round in the air, then a gush of sweet cool sea breeze over the parapet of the castle. Still the people and their Bishop prayed,—the shadow on the sea crept on, a deep dull purple, while the cloud above it, like a wool pack, wore a strange hazy look. Now they could see the water shivering and boiling beneath it, sheets of

foam springing up into the air, great billows lifting themselves, and cut down as with a knife, casting up a cloud of spray.

On rolled the dark shadow, long arms of white mist shot out from it over the sky—now a chill shade fell upon the city, and the sun looked dull and white overhead, rayless, so that the weakest eye could gaze on it with impunity.

Out far the hills and desert were still glowing a vivid yellow, but everything in the city was blue and ghastly. The wind moaned about the towers, and through the eyelet holes it came in shrieks. The palms bowed like reeds before it, it carried with it a fine cloud of sandy particles, the people began to flee before it from the walls, for the blast cut to their bones.

“Shall the gate be opened, Claudius?” asked Taressus, “the God of the Christians is a great God verily!”

“No!” exclaimed the other, “I said, not till rain fell.”

As he spoke there came from the leaden cloud above their heads a vivid streak of light, it swept down on the ground and ran along it, leaping like a beast, with a roll of thunder which made the walls quiver and vibrate as if in awful terror. Then there was a hush of a minute—so still that the least sound in the city was heard; then first with a low hum, then with a roar the rain came down in long sharp lines, dashing like a flood against the walls of Gaza, and making the people run to their homes for shelter.

“Open the gate,” ordered Claudius; and the

Christians came streaming in singing above the roar of the storm, "Alleluia! Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto Thee shall the vow be performed.

"O Thou that hearest prayer: unto Thee shall all flesh come.

"Thou visitest the earth and waterest it; Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God which is full of water: Thou preparest them corn, when Thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly. Thou settlest the furrow thereof: Thou makest it soft with showers: Thou blessest the springing thereof.

"Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness; and Thy paths drop fatness.

"They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing."

First went the grand cross of the Church of Gaza, followed by the people.

"The LORD sitteth above the water flood: the LORD remaineth a King for ever," sung the Bishop. "Alleluia" thundered back the people, and so they came into the great square.

Before them at the foot of the steps of the Marnon was a colossal statue of Venus, an image, the object of the most abominable adoration from the inhabitants of Gaza.

"Alleluia!" chanted the people as the grand cross of the church came before the statue,

"Alleluia! the LORD remaineth a King for ever."

Suddenly the huge black cloud above opened its womb, and there appeared for the moment a perfect bed of fire, then with a hiss and roar the lightning fell.

The earth seemed to heave under the crash of thunder, the rain to cease in horror; for a moment the cross-bearer could hardly bear the rood, he staggered so.

But behold! The Venus, the glory of the Gazceans, lay a heap of broken marble before his feet; as Dagon of old had fallen before the ark, so this image, foul with the most hideous rites and sacrifices offered to it, had bowed itself and fallen before the sign of the Son of Man, which conquered sin and Satan.<sup>1</sup>

Only a few years more and Gaza was a scene of great commotion. Stones rich with gold and colour were being dislodged from the cornice of the great Marnon, ropes were fixed to the ponderous columns, and they were being thrown down on the ground, some even rolling over the steps, crushing them into powder; men with crowbars and axes hewing down Marnas himself; oxen staggering beneath the load of marble slabs which they were drawing up from the port; men shouting, children clapping their hands, and crowing with delight as each pillar staggered and fell, and mothers rushing about to bring their children out of danger from the

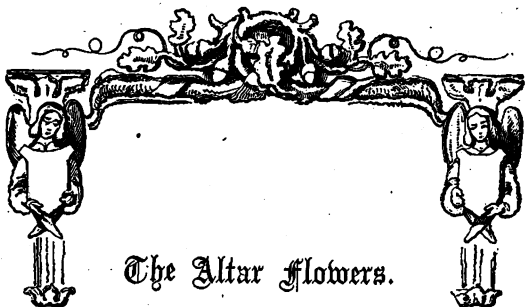
<sup>1</sup> The fall of the statue of Venus before the cross did not in fact happen at the same time as the shower.

splendid fragments which were thrown about, while the work of destruction went on.


"Well, Niger," said the Bishop, coming into the square, "the work is progressing; where Marnon stood, the Church of the living God shall rise. Ah! Taressus, you here. Your child shall be the first baptized in our new cathedral."







A.D. 427.

“Y the Twins, Cyrillus, where is that medicine Archigenes left me; hast been pouring it away?” exclaimed an old man in a peevish voice to his son-in-law, who was standing outside the door into the atrium, looking at the ripples of the water in the basin or impluvium, as the fountain danced about cheerfully in the midst.

“No,” answered Cyrillus, coming to the door, “but I will look for it. Here it is on the bench; it is time that you should take it.”

“And much good will it do me!” exclaimed the sick man, turning on his couch. “You mutter your Christian charms over it, and all the good leaves the cup. I heard of one of your teachers, who, when he was given poison in a goblet made the detestable sign over it.”

Cyrillus looked hastily aside and crossed himself.

"Well," continued the old man, "and then the poison left the cup in the shape of a serpent. Have you heard of that bit of sorcery before?"

"Yes," replied Cyrillus; "it was the Apostle John."

"Ay! ay!" said the old man. "Would to Mars that the serpent had stung him, and there had been an end to this world-subverting delusion; wherefore should you ever think of giving up the established religion? It was good enough for your father and his parents, why should it not suffice you? But it is just the way with you young people; you are eaten up with vanity, and choose ways of your own, instead of going according to those of your country, casting off the worship of heroes for that of a malefactor. It is all vanity!" continued the old man, getting very vehement, and striking his hand on the couch. "I hate the Crucified; He soweth dissensions in a house: if He had never come, the Penates of our house would never have had a half worship."

"But, dear father, what if the teaching of Jesus be truth and right."

"Right, Cyrillus," exclaimed the sick man. "How can it be right if it is not the opinion of the people? Who has a right to regulate about religion but the State? I tell you Diana would have no right to her crescent had not the State decreed it to her; the people are the ones who should decide whether a religion is right, and what are the ornaments and ceremonies suited for its service. Shame! shame! and a curse on

Calama, that the cross should be seen in the place."

"But father," remonstrated his son-in-law, "to you the cross is nothing."

"Nothing!" exclaimed Martial, (that was the name of the old man,) "Why it is the badge of a Christian; whenever I meet one of those dogs and speak to him, the detestable sign is made; when I see one of their buildings, the sign of slavery is there, and many wear it on their persons; if I was in power here, I would have the cross removed from all their buildings, and make it illegal; it is what a State with our faith should do; if the established religion were Christian, (may Jove grant that it never be so,) why then the cross would be allowed, but now that we consider it as an accursed sign, and venerate the blessed divinities, while Apollo has his shrine, Venus her temple here; away with the cross, down with it to the ground!"

The old pagan trembled with the anger he had worked himself into, and glanced fiercely at his son-in-law, who stood in the door-way looking sorrowfully at him.

"O, father!" said he in a low desponding voice, "would that you would let the bishop or some one of our teachers speak with you."

"Never!" answered the old man firmly.

"Think of all the vices that you have been guilty of, and of the abominations of these idols; O would God that your heart was turned to the cross, and then all your sins washed away in holy Baptism."

Just then a young woman came across the atrium or hall, and taking Cyrillus by the hand, drew him away to a seat at some little distance from the door of the sick man's chamber, so that he might not over-hear their conversation.

"Well, Cyrillus!" sighed she looking up into his eyes, "is our father as set on his idols as ever, and he perhaps dying?"

Her husband shook his head.

"Archigenes told me as he was going out, that I must be prepared for the worst, and that perhaps in a short week he might be summoned away. O LORD JESUS!" exclaimed she rising to her feet in a burst of agony, "grant him conversion and holy Baptism before he die."

Cyrillus said nothing, but clasping his wife's hand tightly within his own, led her to the edge of the impluvium. The little fountain was flashing like pure gold and jewels in the glory of sunlight which flooded it from an opening in the roof above, and the crystalline ripples lapped the marble edges of the basin, dancing the little bubbles about on them. The same thought came into both their minds—it was the meetness of pure water as the outward sign of the inward washing in the first of the holy Sacraments.

"O think if our father were to die now, and go unrobed in his wedding garment to the Judgment seat of God," said Cyrilla.

"And be cast out to the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth," murmured the young man.

"There is but one thing we can do, dearest Cyrillus," whispered the youthful wife, laying

her head on her husband's shoulder ; " and that is to pray. Martial will not see Bishop or Priest, not even if we sent to Hippo for the blessed Augustine ; he stops his ears like the deaf adder ; we have done all that lay in our power to draw him to CHRIST, GOD alone can help us now ; I have been to the Church kneeling there, and now I will watch by my father ; do you go there and offer prayers for him ; GOD will, I am assured, hear our cry."

Cyrillus pressed his wife to his heart, and directed his steps to the Church of S. Stephen, a large building lately erected, of white stone, with a cupola over the intersection of the transepts ; over the gate was a great gilded cross which glowed like that of Constantine in the blue skies. Inside, the floor was inlaid with black and white marble, and the walls richly decorated with paintings of the Apostles ; the dome was lighted from above and coloured blue and powdered with gold stars ; in a Majesty eastward was our LORD seated in Glory, with a triangle to represent the Blessed TRINITY, and a dove flying towards Him ; all round the dome looking towards Him were painted the Apostles and Prophets as sheep, their names written above their heads, and beneath their feet flowed a river issuing in four streams from beneath the feet of our LORD, and in these rivers were figures of fish, swans, and men in boats crossing. By the banks also was the representation of the tree of life covered with golden blossoms, and just over the arch of the choir, a cross with

leaves and fruit growing out of it. The chancel was fitted with stalls and an ambo or species of reading-desk lighted by tall candlesticks. The altar was of stone, richly coloured, and over it a pedimented structure of wood supported on pillars, called a ciborium. At the back of this altar were candles, a cross, and on either side vases of magnificent flowers.

When Cyrillus entered the Church, he found one of the Priests preaching to the people about the miracles of the holy Apostles after our LORD'S Ascension, of how handkerchiefs were brought to S. Paul, and how that by blessing them they became so hallowed as to be the means of healing the sick persons to whom they belonged. As the young man listened his faith revived, and when the people had left the Church, he went under the dome, and kneeling down in front of the altar step, burst into a flood of tears.

The whole vault was then glowing with the sun which shone through the circular opening in the top, but as Cyrillus prayed the light became a spot of reddish gold on the wall, moving slowly up it as the sun declined. Presently a Priest entered the Church, and seeing Cyrillus weeping bitterly and praying, he went up to him and laid his hand gently on his head. Cyrillus looked up.

"My son," said the Priest, "is there anything that I can do for thee?"

"My father," said the young man in a choking voice, "Martial, my wife's parent, lies sick and dying; he is a heathen, and we are suppli-

cating God that he may receive the grace of Baptism ere his death ; will God grant our petition ?”

“He will, I hope and believe,” replied the Priest.

“But his heart is as stone now ; there is no turning it, my father.”

“God has ways to work thou knowest not of,” replied the other almost sternly ; “look up.”

Cyrrillus did so, and saw that the last circle of golden light had fallen on the face of our LORD painted on the dome, the nimbus shone like fire, and a soft lustre was diffused over the whole beautiful countenance. A few moments more, and it grew fainter, and then finally went out.

The old man laid his hand on the head of Cyrrillus. “The LORD make His Face to shine upon thee, and grant thee all thy heart’s desire.” Then with a slow step along the marble floor he left the Church.

Cyrrillus looked earnestly at the altar and the beautiful flowers which decorated it—he rose from his knees, and most devoutly entered the choir. At the altar step he paused with lowly reverence, and going on one side mounted with a trembling soul towards it. He leaned over to the vases, and took from the one nearest to him a glorious Pontus rose and a bunch of white Narcissi, and then descending the steps backwards, he knelt once more before the holy altar, and left the Church of S. Stephen.

“He is asleep,” said his wife in a whisper when he came in, “what flowers are those ?”

"Hush!" said Cyrillus, "come with me."

The two entered the sick man's room, the grey evening light hardly penetrated into it through the small door, but his daughter had lighted a little oil lamp which was burning on the floor.

Cyrillus went up to the side of Martial's bed and looked at him.

He was sleeping heavily, and had a gloomy troubled expression of countenance; the young man laid the flowers he had brought round the pillow, and having knelt down for one moment, left the chamber.

Cyrilla watched all night, every now and then sighs broke from the old man's lips, and sometimes his daughter saw him trembling as if in deadly fear; towards morning he became quieter, and as the cool pure light came stealing into the room, she saw his face grey and fixed, with a look of awful fear on it.

She went out into the peristyle to breathe the fresh morning breeze, and the sweet dewy fragrance of the earth wafted to her from the garden, and to watch the first flush of dawn breaking over the rough hill sides.

After having knelt down and said her morning devotions, she returned to the sick room: as she entered, Martial opened his eyes and looked fixedly at her for some time without seeming to recognize her; at length he put out his hand and beckoned to her.

"Cyrilla," said he in a low voice, "send for the Bishop that I may be baptized before I die."

His daughter uttered an exclamation of astonishment and delight, and darted out of the room. Unfortunately the Bishop was away—staying with S. Augustine, in the neighbouring town of Hippo, but a Priest came hurriedly when Cyrillus called him.

“Listen to me,” said the dying man, when they had entered his room. “Last night in my dreams, methought I stood in a strange country, all was desert around, and at my feet flowed a black rushing ocean. I put one foot into the wave, and it made a cold shiver run through me. Cyrillus,” continued Martial, earnestly fixing his eyes on his son-in-law, “I searched for a boat to cross the awful sea in, and there was only a leaking fisher’s skiff, but I entered it and launched forth. First the oar broke, for there was a great worm in it, which had eaten it through, and I looked back at the land whence I had come, and heard nothing save the moaning of the waves upon the black shore, and I saw nothing, there was not one light there; and, Cyrillus, I looked forward then, and before me were thick clouds rolled upon the sea, and balls of fire passing among them, and the monsters of the deep rose on the waters about me. Then my heart quaked for fear, and I saw the water was oozing in at all the joints of my boat; I tried to hoist a sail, but with a shriek it was torn to shreds by the wind, and the boat sank deeper. Then I utterly despaired. Suddenly a little boat glided past me on the waves, light flowed from its helm, its masts, and its sails, for

a Radiant One stood in it guiding it along—and that One had prints of wounds in His Hands, Feet, and in His Side, shining like stars; then I knew that it was JESUS Whom I have reviled. And I saw the boat full of sheep resting there, and little lambs were gathered round the skirts of the Bright One's Clothing, and they sang a new song. The vessel went over the sea leaving a track of light, and the last sweet strains of the heavenly song; and the shepherd-pilot beckoned to me to leave my sinking boat, and enter His."

Then the old man looked round with an anxious face, and a cold tremour crept over his limbs.

"O save me!" he cried in mortal agony, "the waters are coming in upon my soul!"

S. Augustine was sitting under a clump of palms with the Bishop of Calama a few days after this. The Bishop had been just telling him the story of Martial's conversion.

"Surely the LORD hath weapons to fight with which we know nothing of," said the saint, "Tell me, is the man baptized?"

"He became quite humble," replied the Bishop, "and brother Euodius has administered the holy washing to him, and now he is numbered with the faithful departed. His last words were, 'LORD JESUS, receive my spirit,' and yet he knew not that this was the last saying of the blessed protomartyr Stéphen, from whose altar the flowers were taken."

"May he rest in peace," said the saint.



## The Choristers of Carthage.

A.D. 484.



THE Church might naturally have expected a reign of peace, after that the great Empires of the known world were illuminated by the light shining from the Cross of CHRIST. But such was not to be the case: with peace, comes indolence and vice, and sins of the blackest nature had become prevalent in Carthage. God saw that His Church was sinking from her old faith and works there, so He was pleased to visit her with the fire of persecution, not from pagan cruelty, but from the intolerance of heretics.

You have heard of the Arians, who detracted from the Divinity of our Blessed LORD, alleging that He is inferior to the FATHER in nature and in dignity, denying that He is "equal to the FATHER, as touching His Godhead." In Africa, under the protection of the Vandals, who had desolated the northern coast, this heresy rapidly

gained ground. At length Hunneric, the king, began to persecute the Catholics, who would not comply with his views. He drove the Bishops from their sees, and replaced them by Arians, exercising the most horrible cruelties.

It was evening. The sun was just sinking beneath the horizon. The great salt lake of Zibah was shining like the purest snow; for the water of it was completely dried up, leaving nothing but a vast plain of white salt. The line was only broken by a little dark islet with a tower on it, which cast a deep grey shadow over the silver plain. The shores were almost destitute of vegetation; but a few olive trees, and a date here and there crowned the summit of a low hill, on which might be seen collected a little group, enjoying the view from under the shade of one of the trees. There were several old men and some young boys, who were conversing together; a little way apart were a few women and their children, busy preparing various little articles for the evening meal.

"Alexis," said one of the boys, "how I wish that the wicked king had exiled us to Tuburbo, where my mother came from! It is so beautiful there, with Ziguensis raising its rough crags high above the town; and there is plenty of water there, as clear and sparkling as crystal, and it runs through curious old basins; and there are many grand trees there, with such fruit!"

"I know it well," said one of the old men. "But never mind, my son, God sends us here

to try our patience and meekness; how could we have been otherwise than contented if placed in such a sweet spot as under the mountain *Ziguensis*?"

"Well," exclaimed the boy, "but this salt is so tiring to the eyes; and whenever a little wind comes it flies about and gets into the ears and mouth."

"You have not seen a storm on it yet," said the old Bishop (for he was one.) "I remember being on the lake once when a heavy tempest raged; the salt flew up in great clouds, and the sun made rainbows in it; and it seemed as if there was falling a shower of silver dust. The camels could not stand; they crouched down with their noses in the salt, away from the wind, as they do when a sand-storm comes on. But the salt in one's eyes made them very painful for a long while, as it got in, however close you kept them shut. Still, it was a beautiful sight; and after the storm had blown by, the salt lay about in such singular shapes. Here you might have seen a star, with rays in all directions; there a moon; and in other places it was heaped like flowers, or in rings and ovals."

"I wish a storm would come on, holy father," said little Basil, one of the children, who lay at the old man's feet, "I should so much like to see the strange shapes; but did the camels die?"

"No, my son," replied the Bishop, "they rose again when the cloud had passed, and shambled on again over the plain."

"I used to love watching the sand pillars go along over the desert from the top of Byrsa, when we were at dear Carthage," said Alexis, "they marched on as stately as ships in the harbour."

"I heard that our Church is full of the followers of Arius, and that they have put a Bishop there of their own, and acolyths of their own," said one of the boys, with a sigh; "I cannot bear to think of the old times, when we twelve sang there the praises of the Consubstantial, when now it is full of those who deny Him."

"My son," said the Bishop, "they have mistaken a pillar of sand for the pillar founded on a Rock which is the ground of our faith. Their pillar will dissolve away, but the Church of the Only-Begotten will last for ever and ever."

"Didst thou hear, Eugenius," asked a Priest who was by, how nobly the Deacon Muritta fought the fight of faith? Elpidiphorus, whom he had baptized and stood sponsor to, and whom he had loved as his own son, turned, and having the old man brought before him, he bade him deny the faith of Nicea.

"How shall I?" said the venerable man, "who have loved JESUS for these fourscore years!"

"Elpidiphorus ordered him to the rack. They were binding his feet down, when he suddenly drew out the linen in which Elpidiphorus had been baptized, and spreading it out, he held it before his pupil's eyes, and in the hearing of all the people, said,—

“Look upon this linen, which shall accuse you at the coming of the great Judge, and shall be your condemnation to the lake of fire; for you have loved and clothed yourself with cursing, by renouncing the true Baptism of your faith.”

“Dost thou think, father,” asked little Basil, earnestly, “that *we* shall ever be put on the terrible rack? I am sure that I should not have courage to bear it; and then, if I renounced JESUS CHRIST—”

“If thou art called to it, little one,” said Eugenius, gently, “He Who was a little child Himself will assist you.”

“But,” asked Basil, putting his hand upon the Bishop’s knee, “I know that *thou* couldst brave it all, and stand fast to the holy faith; but I am so small and weak. Why, when singing the prayers in the great church, I often forgot the words, and sang, when my mind was away among the ships in the bay; if I could not keep them fixed on the holy service then, you know I should not be strong enough to lay down my life for the dear JESUS.”

“Well, my son,” replied the old man, laying his hand tenderly on the boy’s head, “never fear; if GOD calls thee to make trial, He will give thee strength.”

“O dear Alexis!” cried Basil, looking round at his brother, a taller boy, of slender make, with long, dark hair, and very soft, clear eyes, “O, you will never deny Him, even if I do.”

“Brother, we are not tried yet,” answered Alexis; “But I do hope that I never shall.”

"I have heard," said Sylvanus, another of the boys, "that our master Theucarius has apostatized; think, if we had been in Carthage now, how he would have used the scourge to make us deny the Consubstantial. He was always rather cruel to us twelve."

"I wonder," exclaimed Alexis, "who those are crossing the salt plain; I have noticed them for some time, and now they are not very far off."

"Some of the pagans, I suppose," said one of the old men; "or perhaps some Vandals, bringing fresh exiles."

"They look most like those Arians," said Alexis, "for they are riding, and have dark cloaks, like the soldiers at Carthage."

"It is getting too late to distinguish now," said Eugenius; "we must return to our poor dwellings; but first, my boys, let us sing the sweet Gloria in Excelsis, 'Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of goodwill; we praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee,' &c."

Then all rose, Bishop, Priests, and the twelve little choristers, set up the beautiful strain; you might have heard them far out over the salt lake. The boys' sweet voices rose so high and clear, and above them all the mellow notes of Alexis, whose bright eyes dilated as he sang the sweet hymn he loved so dearly, and used to chant in the loved church at Carthage. As they finished, the party they had noticed came near, winding up the hill.

"O Alexis!" cried Basil clinging to his brother in terror, "it is these wicked Vandals come, and they are going to kill us,—what shall we do?"

"Never fear, Basil dear," said the elder boy, stooping to twine his arm round the little fellow's waist, "the Bishop will speak to them."

It was so dusky that they could only just see the figures of the men as they came up calling loudly for Eugenius.

"Where are those who hold by Nicæa? Eugenius, art thou here? Come forth, and bring thy singing children!" said one of the Vandals, walking among them, and looking for the Bishop.

"Here I am," said he, "What dost thou want?"

"Not thee," answered the Vandal, rudely pushing him back. "Hunneric has sent us for the young vipers,—here they are! The ucarius the lector advised him to have the twelve sent for; bring them to me, we must return to Carthage with them;" and catching hold of Basil, he dragged him forwards.

"Now then," said he, "deny the Consubstantial."

"I acknowledge Him," answered the child, with a trembling voice.

The Vandal struck him with the butt end of his sword, and threw him on the ground. The boys ran to the Clergy and clung to them, entreating the soldiers to leave them there. The good Priests tried in vain to urge the Vandals

to leave them ; with main violence they dragged them away, and locked them up in safety for the night, determining to start on their return to Carthage at day-break. It was a sad night for the twelve little choristers, crowded together in a small room, and fearing death as soon as they arrived at Carthage, or else—what was more terrible—that some of their number might renounce the faith. They spent a long time on their knees ; and their only comfort was, that their Clergy and Bishop were, they felt certain, spending that night in prayer for them.

It was noonday,—hot and sultry. From the top of the Byrsa you looked over Carthage, lying between the hill and the sea ; then there spread forth the beautiful bay and harbours. What is marsh and sand now, was then clear water, which whimpled up softly on the shore, and round the island of Cothon, which lay in the inner harbour. Far out was the beautifully-broken line of the other side of the bay ; the cliffs and swelling hills reflected in deep glowing tints on the silvery blue surface of the sea ; further, was the picturesque peak of Ziguensis, bathed in yellow haze. Here and there among the palm-trees you could have seen the line of stately arches which brought water from the mountain to the city, crossing the level country as straight as an arrow. There was a galley leaving the bay ; the white sail was up, and the oars flashed like fire as they leaped all together out of the sea. As it passed through the rip-

pling water, it looked like some beautiful gull skimming along the surface; and the wavelets, momentarily catching the sun, sparkled like stars. No cloud floated overhead; nothing but pure, deep skies. Every now and then a coarse vulture flapped lazily along, with its raw neck stuck out; and the moon at its first quarter was set in the depths of the blue vault, like some faint straying cloud.

In the city, and about the Byrsa, a rough hill which rose in the middle of the town, once the old citadel, and still fortified, there was some commotion.

"Do you hear, Eudocia," asked one woman of another who was filling her pitcher at one of the larger cisterns, into which the water supplied by the aqueduct flowed, "the twelve children of the great church are tried by Hunneric. Their old master, Theucarius the lector—you remember him—has tried in vain with persuasions to break their constancy, and make them deny the Consubstantial. They have been kept locked up for some while, but they spend their time in singing Psalms and comforting one another."

"Strange indeed," answered Eudocia, "What are they going to do with the poor children?"

"Try what blows will do, now persuasion fails. I am glad that my son is not among them."

"I heard that Theucarius had advised king Hunneric to send for them; for my part, I marvel at his object."

"Oh," exclaimed the other, "he wants to get these children to renounce the faith of Nicæa ;

for if they do, there will be little difficulty, he thinks, in making all the young ones of the city deny the Consubstantial. If God's own children do so, why should not they?"

"But fighting with children!" said Eudocia, emptying her pitcher and filling it again.

"Well, why not?" asked the other; "the Catholics are so bigoted that they cannot be subdued when grown to man's estate; better train them young."

"Poor boys!" said Eudocia, sighing, "I remember them well, they were hearty little children, and well skilled in the notes of song. How sweetly they used to chant! It was quite a marvel to hear them."

In the mean time, Hunneric was trying the constancy of the twelve little confessors. "Miserable children," said he, pacing up and down the broad area within the old citadel walls. "Deny the Consubstantial, and have done with this folly; if you will not, you shall be beaten again."

"We cannot do it," said Alexis firmly.

"String that fellow to a post and beat him till he does. I should have fancied that what you have already received would have sufficed," said the king angrily, alluding to their feet which had been beaten, till they were raw and bleeding. Alexis was stripped to his middle, and his glossy dark hair fell over his tender shoulders.

"O brother!" said Basil, throwing his arms round his neck and kissing him, he whispered—"Do not deny Him, dear Alexis."

"No, Basil," said the boy, "pray for me."

The executioner took the chorister's hands and tied them round the post, and then standing by his side, raised the heavy rhinoceros-hide whip and let it fall on the boy's back; it left dark purple lines on the white delicate skin, and poor little Basil put his hands before his eyes and trembled all over. Alexis looked round at him and smiled. Another blow fell making long red wounds from which the blood spirted. Basil, with his eyes full of tears, knelt down and putting his two hands together, began to pray for his brother.

It was horrible to see the gashes the hard scourge made, tearing off the flesh in long ribbands and leaving the bone bare in some places. There was a grey paleness over Alexis' face, but he did not shrink or cry out.

"Come!" exclaimed Hunneric, "renounce the faith of Nicæa."

The boy could not speak, but he shook his head feebly.

"Beat him again," said the king fiercely.

A few more blows fell; the scourge was dripping with the lad's blood, then his knees gave way, and he dragged heavily on the cord which bound his wrists together.

"It is of no use going on," said the man; "the boy has fainted."

Hunneric ordered him to be untied and carried away; and then turning to little Basil, asked him what he had been doing on his knees all the while.

"Only praying," said the child in a faint trembling voice.

"Praying!" exclaimed the king. "What for?"

"For Alexis," replied the child, growing firmer, "that he might not renounce the Consubstantial."

"You shall do it for him then," cried the king. "Here, Fiducius, try what you can do with this Catholic viper."

"O quickly, please!" exclaimed Basil earnestly, "Before Alexis sees."

They stripped the poor little boy of all his clothes, and laid him on a frame with cords tied to it.

"You may stretch him out and try the pincers," said Hunneric laughing.

The boy trembled very much as the windlass was turned, straining his arms and legs, the executioner gave it a sharp turn, and Basil uttered a faint cry.

"Now then," exclaimed Hunneric, going up beside him; "do as I bid you."

"O no! no!" said the child, earnestly, "I did not mean to cry out; I will not do it again."

The king pointed to one of the pincers; Fiducius nodded significantly. Basil looked up into the blue sky overhead, and his small lips moved in prayer. Perhaps He Who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb prevented him from feeling the full pain inflicted when the flesh on his side was torn off by the pincers, but no signs of suffering showed themselves on the innocent

face on which the sun was shining. Fiducius took out some red hot hooks from a small fire near, and placed them against the child's side, where the pincers had been, and he stuck them violently into the fleshy part of the leg. Hunneric again came up to him.

"Leave me alone!" said the little boy directly he saw him, "I love the LORD JESUS! the Consubstantial stands by me and succours me."

"Take him off—the fool is mad," exclaimed the king. "It is of no use going on. Here, Theucarius, try what you can do."

The lector stood forward and beckoned to the children.

"Come, Sylvanus!" said he, "What folly this is; you want to turn martyr I suppose; you have been told all those pretty stories about the saints, and you want to imitate them; it is very silly of you; what can induce you to go through all this pain? Just say that you believe the SON to be inferior to the FATHER; a very short sentence surely, and you shall be set free, nay, more, the king will take care of you as before."

"He has driven us from our dear church where we loved to sing," said one of the boys indignantly.

"Well, child!" replied the apostate lector, "you shall sing there again and have your fair cottas back, and you shall chant as sweetly as before, for the people of Carthage are grieved not to hear your beautiful voices again. Come,

my boys, shake off this folly, and obey me as you used to when I was your master. Deny—”

“Art thou not ashamed,” exclaimed Sylvanus, his cheeks glowing. “How hast thou the boldness to tempt us, thou who shouldst lead us on as thou didst in the Psalms; think, Theucarius; and dost thou not blush that thy children should steal the crown of martyrdom away, which thou shouldst have been the first to grasp? Think not to withhold us of our pride, when JESUS, of like nature with the FATHER, cometh in judgment on the earth, we twelve shall stand up and condemn you before His face to eternal fires, for it were better, He said, that thou shouldst be cast headlong into the sea than cause one of His little ones to stumble.”

“Cut out their tongues, sire,” exclaimed Theucarius, angrily, “the young vipers know how to hiss well!”

“Nay!” cried the king. “What are our Bishops to do at the Divine Mysteries? There are no singers; we must have these to sing; let them be shut up and not suffered to go out until they lose this fit of madness; a little discomfort daily felt will do far more, Theucarius, than any of these harsher means.”

“Let them be scourged again, sire!” asked the lector.

“Well, give them the lash again, Fiducius, and harder also, especially to that young one,” pointing to Sylvanus, who was still looking indignantly upon his old master.

One after the other the boys were fastened up to the post, and the scourge fell heavily upon them. Sylvanus bore it best, crying out at each stroke, "I give Thee thanks, Thou equal with the FATHER;" at length he fainted. The boys were carried off to the house in which they had been kept before. And now I must leave them there, and pass on another year.

The hand of God fell upon the wicked Huneric: he died in the most fearful torments, being devoured of worms, as was Herod before. Then the Church had rest. The Bishops returned to their Sees; priests stood again at their altars; and the twelve little choristers sang again in the old church. "And now," says Victor, who lived at the time I am writing of, "these are regarded in Carthage with great reverence, and looked upon as twelve youthful apostles; they all dwell together; they have their meals together; they sing together the psalms, and together make their boast in the LORD."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Victor Utic. de Persec. Vandal. lib. iii.





## The Story of S.S. Ethelbert and Ethelred.

A.D. 664.



YOU must not be inclined to skip over this story because you see me begin with a genealogical account, which for your sakes I will shorten as much as I possibly can ; but in order that you may understand my story, it is necessary that you should know some rather uninteresting particulars first.

There was once a king of Kent called Eadbald, who had two sons, Eormenred and Erconbert ; when the father died he left his kingdom to the younger, and Eormenred never disputed his brother's possession of the crown. At last king Erconbert died, and the great Egbert his son succeeded him : some time after both Eormenred and his wife died also, leaving three children, a daughter, Ermenburga, and two little sons, Ethelbert and Ethelred ; these two boys were sent to Egbert's court to be brought up. Pro-

perly, you see, the eldest of these little ones should have inherited the throne, and not Egbert. The king knew this very well, and being a bad man, felt jealous of the simple children.

In his court moreover was a wicked Pagan, called Thunir, who had the ear of Egbert, and was continually advising and exhorting him to follow that which was evil.

Thunir hated children; if he had been a Catholic, and not a Pagan, he would have remembered that they are especially dear to JESUS CHRIST, and that therefore he should treat them with great gentleness and love.

Especially did this wicked man hate these two little boys, for every one else in the palace loved them, they were so humble and quiet; although they were princes yet they never liked to trouble any one, but spent most of their time in prayer together, they were never to be seen apart, they would generally walk about with their arms round each other's necks. Thunir once endeavoured to make them quarrel, but it was in vain, they loved each other too dearly. His chamber moreover was near theirs, and he could hear them singing hymns and prayers together, and being a heathen the evil spirit within him troubled him more and more, so that he determined to get rid of them both. One evening the two little boys were with the king, and talking to him. Egbert's dress consisted of a loose tunic, bound round the waist by a girdle, over this was thrown a cloak which was fastened by a morse at the chest, his shoes were long and

pointed, and split over the instep. His beard was divided in the middle and twisted into two points.

"Oh, uncle!" (so the children called him, although properly speaking he was their cousin,) said Ethelbert, "What a great thing it is to be a king like thee, all the people here in Eastry, and throughout the kingdom, to obey thee! shall I ever become a king?"

"No," replied Egbert, knitting his brows.

"How do people become kings?" asked the child; "does it always come from their fathers' being kings?"

"Yes, generally," replied Egbert.

"But, uncle, if there are many children, which gets made king then? I suppose the eldest."

"Take the children away!" exclaimed Egbert suddenly, "I will not hear any more of this foolish prattle."

He was troubled at the words of the little boy, thinking he had some meaning in what he said; but had he looked into his sweet innocent face, the large Saxon blue eyes, the broad noble forehead and light hair, he need have had no fears. Thunir stood close by the chair of the king, and when the boy spoke he glanced towards Egbert, and said in a subdued voice—

"If the young whelp scratches, when an old one it will bite."

The two children left the room with their arms twined round each other's necks.

"Thunir!" said the king, "come out with me into the garden,—on my word I wonder what

that boy meant, has any one been telling him, think you, that he is heir to my throne?"

"Doubtless their father did before he died."

"Nay, Thunir!" exclaimed the king; "how could that be? Eormenred never desired to reign."

"That is likely enough," replied the heathen counsellor; "but what parent does not desire the highest honours for his children? No doubt but that he bade them remember that the throne might be theirs, and that they were to await the time when they should become men, and be able to wrest it from thee."

"I will check them if they do," said Egbert.

"Little kittens have a single life, but old ones nine," muttered Thunir, smiling grimly.

"I see not what thou meanest," said the king; "perhaps they may not live!"

"Were I thee!" exclaimed Thunir, "probabilities would soon become certainties."

Egbert shook his head with displeasure.

"I shall be glad if they die naturally, but God forbid that I should hasten them out of this world."

They were then walking near an ivy-draped tower of the palace in which the two boys slept; as Egbert spoke, they heard the sweet voices of the children issuing from their window, as they sung their evening psalms and prayers together.

"Thou wouldst rejoice at their death," said Thunir.

The king made no reply, but walked hastily away.

The evil counsellor stole quietly up his stairs, and stood listening at the door of the children's room.

"I wonder when we shall see our sister again?" said Ethelred. "Why does she not live here at the palace?"

"I know not, brother, but it is far happier for her in the dear home, than in this city; for all that Eastry is a grand town, yet would I rather be in the hazlewoods again."

"So would I!" exclaimed the younger, "I do not care for this grand place, when that bad man Thunir is always scowling at us as if he meditated doing us an injury."

"He is a heathen, and knows nothing of God," said Ethelbert. "How he tries to make us quarrel, does he not, brother?"

"But we will not, for all he tries," answered Ethelred, putting his arms round his brother's neck and kissing him.

"Let us kneel down and pray for him," said Ethelbert, "perhaps God may turn his heart if we pray for him every day."

The little fellows knelt down side by side before their small oratory, and Thunir could hear their silvery clear voices uniting in prayer for him. A good spirit came down from heaven and strove to turn his heart, but he thrust the blessed thought from him, and the evil one gained complete mastery.

Then the children crept into bed, and peacefully fell asleep with their golden hair mingled on the pillow, and their rosy cheeks laid one

against the other ; and Thunir could hear their faint even breathing in their sleep.

He stole off to his own room ; and the night gradually deepened in.

A soft clear moon rose, and cast pools of light about the floor wherever it flowed in through the narrow windows. Now and then in the still night could be heard the call of the passing husbandman, or the note of the shepherd whistling, 'Sommer is y-commen in ;' but at last all was silence.

In the children's room the only sound was that of their softly drawn breathing ; the pure light fell in a patch on their bed, and faintly lit up the little cross of the oratory beyond. The arm of Ethelbert was round the neck of his little brother, and Ethelred's head covered with beautiful yellow curls rose and fell on his brother's breast. The moon shone on the sleeping face of the elder, and his white throat : there was a heavenly smile playing about his lips, as his head was drooping back, the long locks flowed off his forehead, and strayed all over the pillow.

Then there crept a dark figure through the light, casting a black shade over the couch, and there was the sound of a stealthy tread on the floor. Ethelbert moved in his sleep,—then there was a little struggle, a sigh from the younger, and a half cry, then a few faint moans, and all was still.

A little later the two bodies were buried in a secret place, and none on earth knew of the dread-

ful deed, save Thunir. But God will not let murder remain undiscovered. Suddenly a clear light shone all over the place, a globe of wonderful brilliancy lighted up the air over the court of the castle. Every one awoke with a start, and the wondering people rushed in terror from their beds, and stood in the court trembling: among them was Thunir, a ghastly greyness overspread his face, his knees knocked together, and when he met Egbert he gasped out, "It is your doing; you set me on to it."

The king drew back in surprise.

"Thunir," said he, "speak directly, I understand thee not."

"The children!" groaned the terrified man; "you said you wished they were dead."

"Well!" exclaimed Egbert, growing deadly pale.

"It is your doing; they are dead, I—I—."

"O God!" shrieked the king; "think you that I meant that thou shouldst rob them of their sweet lives?" and he rushed upon the wretch with fury. "Tell me where thou hast buried them."

"I dare not go there!" groaned Thunir, looking at the glare of the fire which lit up the spot. "They are hidden there; but let me not see them," and he rushed as a maniac away.

"Seize him!" thundered the king; "carry him down to the prison in the Red tower. You Sidroc, bear word to my lord Theodore of Canterbury that we may exhume the bodies of these blessed martyrs with due solemnity."

At morning dawn the prelate with a large company of priests, and many nobles of the court saw the two little children raised from their place of mean burial, and attended them with great pomp to Wakering, where they were buried.

They had a rough and wild manner of doing things in those days which makes us wonder now.

In recompense for his unintentional participation in the martyrdom of the two holy children, the king offered their sister as much land as she wished ; and she came to court leading a white doe by the hand, and requested as much ground as this animal could traverse in a day.

The following morning the king accompanied by Thunir whom he had again taken into favour, for his cold ambitious spirit felt but little the guilt of having caused his cousins' death, proceeded to the Isle of Thanet where Ermenburga loosened the leash which restrained her beautiful doe. It fled from her like the shadow of a cloud on the moor side, bounding on, followed by Egbert and his nobles.

The heart of Thunir had not been touched, his day of grace was passed for ever, and the devil took undisturbed possession of his heart ; consequently far from dreading the vengeance of God, Whose power had been displayed over the bodies of the blessed children martyrs, he even now felt angry with the king for giving up any of his lands to a simple maiden as recompense for the death of her brothers ; he had en-

deavoured to dissuade the king from it, but he, who feared not God, dreaded the opinion of men, and lest men should judge him harshly he had granted Ermenburga her request.

Away over the wild marsh bounded the doe, away past stunted willow and straggling beech coppice, away past Hengist's oak, rent and seamed with the storms of years; and after it galloped the king: then over a bit of furzy down covered with the little bind-weed that wove itself like a net about the yellow gorse which was surrounded by swarms of humble bees and bright green flies: now down again among swamps where the ground is precarious,—the doe nears the sea, turns and darts away again through the reeds and rushes of a marsh.

"By my father's soul!" cried Thunir; "this miserable brute is going round the whole island; shall we stop?"

"Nay, nay!" exclaimed the king; "we must see how far it goes."

"And a goodly chase this for a king," said Thunir scornfully,—"to be coursing over marsh, moor, and fen after a doe; dost thou, a man gifted with sense, thus follow the lead of a senseless animal? good faith! the whole sequel is as foolish as the beginning of the story; why shouldst thou give up any of thy land in return for the life of those two miserable babes?"

Egbert glanced angrily at the heathen, whose horse just then reared with a snort; its feet had got entangled in a quagmire, and it plunged furiously to escape.

It was one of those marshes that swallow up everything which goes on them, and in vain did the poor beast struggle. Egbert held out his hand to reach his companion, but his own horse reared so that he could not get it near the swamp. The horse of Thunir had sunk below the girths, every muscle was standing out on its body, the eyes were starting out, the nostrils distended; the wretched man strove to extricate himself from the saddle and reach dry land, but he only sunk deeper and deeper. He tried to leap up, —the black mud spluttered about his face and arms and sucked him deeper in, still he stretched out his hands and tried to clutch at tufts of grass, but they came up, with the soft mire dripping from their roots: the horse was gone, Egbert could hardly distinguish Thunir now, he was so covered with the black liquid which bubbled up round him with the last convulsive writhings of the sunk horse. Then came a furious plunging and struggling as the suffocating wretch made a last effort to extricate himself—then one long horrid despairing shriek, a curse from the lips now to be closed for ever on the God of Ethelbert and Ethelred, and he was gulped down for ever.

The king could see by the quivering of the mire that he was struggling convulsively under it, and by the bubbles which rose to the top, that the last breath was leaving his body.

Thus did God judge in this world the murderer of His faithful little ones.

When Egbert's companions came up he made

them cast in heaps of stones where Thunir had been swallowed up.

Ermenburga raised a convent in the isle under the patronage of S. Mary, in memory of her holy brothers ; and there passed her days with her sisters in quiet and prayer ; and now is resting till the day when the LORD maketh up His jewels.







## The Picture in the New Palace.

A.D. 845.



It was an evening just like this—the sun had set some hours ago behind a bank of dark clouds which overshadowed the horizon, while above them the sky was clear; there was just this silvery-green glow in the firmament above, duller and more yellow where it shone through the haze which rose from the earth, but pure higher up.

It gives one thoughts of the region of light far away where the sun is dawning now: high up is one star seeming to hang there, a reflection of the glory hidden from our eyes. Just such an evening as this a thousand years ago;—how quietly day after day glides on, one like another, the same weathers, the same damp evening mists, or the same clear dewy mornings, just the same a thousand years ago as now, and perhaps will be a thousand years hence. Man however changes; he is the only one thing

in nature which does ; and the person I wish to describe to you is hardly in the dress you would expect to meet with now.

He was mounted on a magnificent black horse which he sat with an ease, and guided with a facility which showed that he had been accustomed to the saddle from childhood. He wore a great deal of hair on his face, his beard was long and red. Round his neck was a golden torque or collar, and there were gold enamelled armillæ on his wrists, little rings being fastened to some of these so that when he moved his arm they clinked. In his hand he bore an unstrung bow with a bunch of scarlet horsehair adorning either extremity. Such was Boigoris, King of the Bulgarians. His horse stood motionless. Far as the eye could reach, extended one unbroken line of wild uncultivated steppe covered with short grass ; here and there, black against the horizon, rose circular mounds of great size, they were the tombs of the old Bulgarian kings.

To the south shone water and marsh reflecting the cold bleak sky ; every now and then a stork flew overhead with its long legs hanging down.

Boigoris was moodily looking at one of the huge mounds over the dust of an ancestor.

"How do you rest there ?" he soliloquised in an under-tone. "You have your horse, your dog, and your weapon buried with you,—would that I knew whether you used them ; I doubt little but that if we were to open this mound we

should find your bones, and those of your horse and dog. I do not believe that you can have taken them with you to the Bright Home. I marvel what will fall to my share after death!" and the king shook his arm impatiently till the rings on the armlet tinkled.

"Ah, Yôk!" said he, as an attendant came up at full speed, and reined his horse in suddenly by the king's side, so that it reared high in the air.

"I soon distanced thee; no more hunting for to-day, to-morrow we will try again,—nay! but we will go and see how my new palace is getting on; I wonder how we shall adorn it when once it is finished! I have given orders that the roofs shall be painted with red stripes,—but within! Yôk, can you advise me?"

"Your supreme and super-excellency," begun the attendant, who had been to Constantinople, and picked up some of the Greek forms of adulation, "in the city of the Cæsars the walls are wonderfully painted with beautiful pictures of battles and hunting: they are marvellous to behold."

"Ay!" said the king, "but we have no artists here; a painter drew beasts and a chase on the walls of my castle, and I made him write the names underneath, or by the golden plough! no one would have known what they were intended for, and now only those who can read."

"If your splendour, brighter than the sun, more gentle than the moon, more brilliant than the stars, will hearken to his lowliest servant, he

will advise that a messenger should be sent to the Emperor Basil, and that he be entreated to send a great artist to your most august presence, who may paint the walls of your new palace."

"By the bearded gods!" cried the king urging his horse forward vehemently. "Well spoken, Yôk, to-morrow thou shalt go to the glorious city of the Greeks, and bring me one."

Now I am going for one moment to show you the king's sister.

She was a lovely maiden dressed with somewhat of Greek taste, for she had been a prisoner in Constantinople once, and at present in her little chamber in the castle.

The light was quite obscured in the room, only a grey, cold glare struggled faintly in at the window, but got no farther. All was not, however, quite dark within, for a little lamp burned before a picture. If you looked close you would see it was no heathen subject, far from it, but a beautiful painting of the Panhagia, or Blessed Virgin, holding the Divine Infant in her arms. The background of the picture was gold, and the nimbus or glory round the two heads richly embossed; perhaps you would hardly admire it now, but for all that there was great loveliness in the faces of our Blessed LORD and His Mother; she was as it were holding Him out to hear the prayers of all, and He had His arms extended to embrace the world. Kneeling before this was the princess, her pale anxious face raised, and the light from the silver lamp

flickering over it; her eyes were fixed earnestly on the sweet childish face of our LORD, and her soul was poured forth in prayer to Him for her brother the king, that he might be brought into the One Fold under the One Shepherd.

Some time passed since Yôk had been sent to Basil the emperor for an artist to decorate the new palace of Boigoris, before he returned; the painter was immediately ushered into the king's presence. He was a quiet, grave-looking person, with a greyish beard, he wore a coarse serge dress bound round his waist by a rope; his name was Methodius.

"Well, sir painter!" said the king, "thou must draw me a grand picture for my new palace, come with me now, and thou shalt see where it is to be."

He mounted his horse, and made Methodius ride beside him.

"Hast thou ever painted any picture for the Emperor Basil?" asked the king. "What was it about?"

"I have painted nothing for him," said Methodius, gravely.

"By the golden plough! but I hope he confides in thy skill, nevertheless; remember, I must have a grand picture, something terrible to look upon."

"It shall be very terrible," said Methodius.

"Yonder are the roofs of the palace," exclaimed the king, pointing to some high ridges which appeared above the underwood through which they were riding.

As they came nearer the wood was cleared away, and they obtained a full view of the edifice. It was built wholly of wood, the walls low, but the roofs of prodigious height rising into lofty cones with red and black stripes painted on them by way of enlivening their appearance. Within all was unfurnished: the king and artist passed through a long passage and came into the hall. A huge arch of timber framed the end which was plastered over.

"There!" said the king, "what think you, sir painter; is not that a fair place for a picture? large it needs must be, let it only be grand and terrible."

"So shall it be," replied Methodius, bluntly, while he examined the position assigned, and the play of light on it with true artistic eye.

"How long wilt thou take?" asked Boigoris, eagerly looking forward to the time when his hall would become an object of wonder to all his chiefs and nobles.

Methodius shook his head doubtfully, but turning to the king said, "One thing I demand,—that I may be left undisturbed here to complete my picture, that no one may see it till it is finished."

"Except myself," said Boigoris.

"Nay," answered Methodius, briefly, "I make no distinctions of person; I cannot paint unless in perfect stillness."

"What must be cannot be gainsaid," murmured the monarch, and he reluctantly gave his assent to the stipulation of the artist.

"Remember," he repeated, as he left the new palace, "something very terrible."

"Very!" replied Methodius, looking straight into the king's face with a peculiar smile playing about his mouth.

"I wonder," said Boigoris, as he rode away, "I wonder whether my looking on spoiled the painting of the chase in my castle, the wild boar was coloured green; dost think, Yôk, that I may have changed the hue of the paints?"

Day after day passed and the painter was not seen, he remained closely shut up within the palace; the king came again and again, but could not see him. Weeks rolled by, and Boigoris chafed with impatience and curiosity; still he could see nothing of the painter to inquire of him even how his picture was progressing; all he could hear was that he was regularly supplied with meals which he very frequently never touched, and that if ever he stirred abroad it was at night, and that while away the door of the hall was fastened.

At length the king could bear it no longer, he went to the hall and thundered at the huge wooden doors, but there was no answer; he called, threatened, and entreated, but in vain. At length, thoroughly exasperated, he ordered them to be burst open; some willing hands with the aid of a beam soon effected his purpose, and the doors flew apart violently; Methodius stood before them with his grey eyes flashing fire, holding out his hand to ward the intruders off from coming any further.

"Stop!" he shouted, "where is thy promise, O king? Leave here, or I shall destroy my unfinished picture, and get me back to Basil the emperor."

Boigoris looked curiously at the wall opposite; a huge red curtain covered it so that he could see no more trace of the painting than a little piece of gold just above it.

He murmured at the delay, and told Methodius that he could wait no longer, finished or unfinished he must see the picture.

"In twelve days," said the artist, "it shall be completed, and thou shalt see it."

Boigoris turned and left, but before doing so he gave orders that the door should be mended, so that Methodius might be able to fasten it again.

He counted the days with impatience, and as he hunted with Yôk, he would ask him about the pictures in Constantinople, and make conjectures on the subject of the one now painting for him.

"It is to be very dreadful," said he, "I suppose it is a hunting scene, and taken just when the beast is at the death, and it knows that its fate is certain."

At length the day came, the king was soon at his new palace, and he rushed eagerly into the hall: the curtain was still over the end, but Methodius stood ready before it to exhibit it, with his eyes fixed on the ground.

Directly Boigoris and his sister whom he had brought with him came up, at a signal from Me-

thodius, two boys drew back the curtain and the picture was revealed.

As I told you, there was a great arch of wood which supported the roof, and was filled in with planks. On these boards the picture was painted. Directly under the crown of the arch was a bed of gold in which on a white throne was a figure of our Blessed LORD seated. Rays streamed from Him through all the space around, which was crowded with very faint shadowy forms of angels whose wings caught the reflection of the glory.

On either side of our LORD were seated Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, and Virgins, with their feet resting on a fleecy cloud. Below was the earth, graves were opening and the dead rising from them: on the right hand was a meadow covered with the most gorgeous flowers, in which angels and risen men were mingled hand in hand, while on the extreme right were towers and walls, through whose gates and windows gushed floods of golden light; to this angels were leading the Redeemed, one had her face turned, and the king recognized it as his sister's.

On the left, however, was a more awful scene: flames and fire were swallowing up sinners and evil spirits; the old Dragon was represented as chained down on a bed of sulphur, writhing in torture; above, a demon was clasping a man who wore a royal crown; the face was distorted with horror, yet Boigoris could tell that it was himself, and he trembled.

He turned his eyes hastily away, and fixed

them on the beautiful meadow ; then a soft expression stole over his countenance, and turning to his sister he said,—“ This is thy God saving His people, and condemning those who will not have Him.”

Methodius sprang on a ledge before his picture, his eye dilated, and a holy zeal fired his countenance ; extending his arms, pointing now to one part of the picture, then to another, he explained to the king the whole doctrine of the final judgment of men, their fate depending on their works in this world, and the king trembled. He went on to speak of the glories prepared for the Baptized who keep the faith,—great and purifying thoughts swelled the bosom of the king, and going up to the painter-priest, he said, with his head bowed—“ Take me and teach me, that I too may go on the beautiful side of the picture.”





## The Martyrs of Croeland.

AUG. 24TH, A.D. 869.



O you think it a proud and glorious thing that England should be considered the most enlightened country under the sun, or called the mistress of the seas? There is, however, another name she has gone by which is far more glorious—*The Isle of Saints*.

What a proud thing for Britain to have her soil watered with the blood of many martyrs; to have her churches full of memorials of saintly men and confessors; to have her villages called by the names of blessed ones of whom the world knows nothing and cares less! How glorious when the saints of JESUS rise to meet their LORD, to see the train gathering thick and fast from this dear isle! S. Alban, the first of the band, and a goodly array of Bishops, Abbots, Priests,—ay, and kings—following.

How their names, as we think, come thronging on us! How the heart burns when we remember that we are sons of the same soil which bred these virgin souls! How those blessed ones whom fair England has sent out to the east and the west to preach glad tidings of great joy, will rejoice when the LORD writeth up His people, that they were born in her!

How fruitful this blessed land still is in Confessors! The chain reaching from S. Alban, caught up by S. Thomas of Canterbury—by a martyr-king, and another martyr-Bishop,—by the famous confessors of the time of William of Orange,—ay, even to our days, when men stand bravely by the Cross of CHRIST, and are not ashamed to fight under His banner against wickedness in high places, and all the array of scorn and hate which the world can pour upon them!

I am going to carry you to the times long gone by, when many whose names have not reached us perished in their cloistered retreats beneath the sword of the pagan Norseman; and to a hallowed spot, too—the shrine of the holy Guthlac, the hermit of the fens.

Croyland Abbey was a strange and picturesque building, even in the old Saxon days. There was no huge vaulted church with gorgeous windows then as there was afterwards, but a group of buildings, erected for the most part of wood, but with a stone church built of flint and rubble-work in the shape of a cross, with a square squat central tower, capped by a

small spire of lead. The windows of the church were very small and round-headed,—some richly sculptured with zigzags, or strange animals' heads. In fact, the style was what we should now call very early Norman. Before the door was a richly-carved stone cross, with a circle surrounding the arms, and covered with interlacing cables and serpents.

The country round was dull and uninteresting; one field was divided from another by a ditch full of rushes, from which sprang up every now and then the little snipe, with its strange diving flight; or you startled a frog, which leaped with a plunge into the oozy water, disturbing a whole galaxy of water spiders, which darted about here and there, as if engaged in some incomprehensible quadrille. The gorgeous blue dragon-fly came dancing round the heads of the reeds, and perching on the water-mallow, in a dreamy manner, quivering for a moment in the sun,—then vanishing off to sport with a bright green one in quite an opposite direction to that in which you were looking, and seeming still cool and dreamy on its gauze wings. A pollard willow stood here and there, near swampy patches of land, or little waveless sheets of water which reflected every leaf of the trees in their helplessness on a hot August morning.

The Abbey gates were closed and barred, for the inmates were in great fear of the Northmen, or Danes, (as all these pirate sea-kings were generally called) who were devastating the

country round. That day, most of the brethren had been sent away with the treasures of the house, and had concealed themselves in the wood of Incarig. But there still remained in the abbey the elder brethren and the children: "For," said Abbot Theodore, "the Danes care only for the treasures of this place; and we, the aged, may not leave the place, and a wild beast would not injure the little ones." Moreover, it was thought that if they went to Incarig, they might risk the discovery of the Abbey plate. There remained also the Sub-prior Lethwyn, the Deacon Elfget, and the Subdeacon Savinus.

Some of the boys—as there seemed no immediate danger—were playing near a pool outside the monastery gates. They had made some little boats, which they were floating, and were wishing that the least breath of wind might rise to fill the parchment sails.

"Come with me, dear Ulric, and bring Tugarius with you," said the tallest among the lads.

"Why! where are you going to, Egelred?" asked Ulric, leaving a boat he had been mending for a sweet little child of ten years old, with soft blue eyes, and a bright, smiling countenance.

"I cannot stop playing here while the Dane is close at hand; let us go up to the top of the hill and see whether there are any signs of the enemy."

"Signs enough!" exclaimed Ulric, taking hold of his friend's hand, "Look at the thick

line of smoke out yonder—that tells its own tale !”

“Come, Tugarius !” said Egelred : and the little blue-eyed boy ran up to him, “O let me sail my boat !”

“Presently, darling,” replied the boy, “but come with Ulric and me now.”

The child made no further remonstrance, and the three strolled up a little rising ground near the Abbey. On the horizon lay a heavy cloud of smoke curling along the ground ; in one place it was seen pouring up in volumes.

“Is that the pagans’ doing ?” asked the little boy, clinging to Egelred’s hand.

“I fear so,” sighed the elder boy ; and throwing himself down on the grass, he drew Tugarius’ golden curly head close to his own.

Ulric sat down meditatively. Egelred did not speak for some time, for he had shaded his eyes with his hand, and was looking into the deep blue sky. A solemn expression passed over it as, in a rapt manner, he continued to gaze into it. At last, turning his head round to Ulric, he said, in a low firm voice, “We shall be there soon ! I was thinking that it was strange I could see so little in yonder blue,—not even a star now, although I have been trying to find one ; and before sunset we shall see it full of bright angels and spirits passing here and there through it like flashes of light.”

“Why Egelred !” exclaimed Ulric, jumping up, “are you mad ? What has put the thought of dying into your head now ?”

"Never mind," replied the boy, quietly. "I feel it in my heart that you and I shall be with those that sleep before the dawning of another sun,—it has been on my mind all the day."

"But Egelred!" exclaimed Ulric, "Father Lethwyn said that the Dane would never injure us boys, even if he does come to S. Guthlac's. I wish that we had gone with the other Brothers."

"I do not," said Egelred. "We should have been in their way, and been likely to lead to the detection of the church vessels. Moreover, they will find it hard to get food enough to support themselves. Oh, it never would have done to have had us with them; I am not afraid to die,—are you, dear Ulric?"

"Well!" said Ulric, thoughtfully, "It is so sudden—Oh no!" he exclaimed, after a moment's pause, "Indeed I am not afraid to die."

"Nor am I," whispered the child, nestling into Egelred's arms; "but do you think that they will kill my brother?"

"What! Lethwyn? I hope not;" replied Ulric.

"Sing *Cœlestis Urbs* with me," said Egelred, "It is well for us to think of the Heavenly City now we are approaching its gates."

"Is it great pain dying?" asked Tugarius.

"It is like those strange floating things we find on the mere in spring. Do you remember how we saw a fly get out of the shell once? The flies live or sleep in them till warm weather comes, when they eat their way out. How that poor fly we saw struggled to get away, till at

last escaping, it spread wing and left the ugly shell for ever."

"Now, Egelred, let us begin the hymn," said Ulric: and the three boys lifted up their voices in a clear strain, and chanted—

"Thou heavenly new Jerusalem,  
Vision of peace in prophet's dream!  
With living stones built up on high,  
And rising to yon starry sky;  
In bridal pomp thy form is crown'd,  
With thousand thousand angels round!

"O Bride betrothed in happy hour,  
The FATHER'S glory is thy dower;  
Thy Bridegroom's grace is shed on thee,  
Thou Queen all fair, eternally!  
To CHRIST allied, Thy Prince ador'd,  
Bright shining city of the LORD!"

"Hark! listen, Egelred," said Tugarius, pulling his hand. The boys below had caught up the beautiful hymn, and their sweet, plaintive voices answered—

"Behold, with pearls they glittering stand!  
Thy peaceful gates to all expand!  
By grace and strength divinely shed,  
Each mortal thither may be led,  
Who kindled by CHRIST'S love, will dare,  
All earthly suff'rings now to bear."

The tears were rolling down the elder boy's cheeks as he sang. He put his arm round Ulric's neck, and said in a whisper, "We will dare, dear brother!"

"There is the bell!" exclaimed Tugarius, as

the deep notes of the Abbey bell came rolling towards them on the balmy summer air.

"Look! look!" cried Ulric, suddenly, with a voice of terror, at the same time pointing to a spot about two miles off, from which a stream of fire and smoke burst out at the moment, "It is the White Farm!"

"Then the Danes are there!" said Egelred, quietly; "before service is over they will be at our gates. Hark! do you hear the cries?"

"Oh yes! yes!" cried Ulric, "Let us run away and hide somewhere, down among the osier beds. O do let us escape."

"But Jerusalem!"

' Each mortal thither may be led,  
Who kindled by CHRIST's love, will dare  
All earthly suff'ring now to bear,' "

murmured Egelred,—and his companion blushed.

"I am a coward," said he. "Go on to the Abbey, it is our duty to be there by this. So the three boys descended the hill, and joining the others entered the convent.

I think it is hardly a matter of surprise that people now-a-days set themselves so fixedly against Religion, and laugh or scoff at holy words and practices: for every service of GOD has, alas! been carried on in England in a way plainly showing people that the ministers of that Religion cared nothing for it, or, at all events, very little. To me it seems a wonderful thing that any Priest should dare to offer the LORD's most precious Body in the slovenly manner in

which it has been and is now often done, and yet believe that he is performing a Divine Service; that he should have the boldness to enter the Presence of Him Whose eyes can detect hypocrisy,—round Whom the angels veil their countenances,—Who maketh the clouds His chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind,—with a careless, slovenly manner, in a dirty or untidy vestment, in a damp, uncared-for church, at an altar worse than the worst table in his own daintily-furnished house! How can it be wondered at that from such seeds we have reaped a whirlwind?

How far different was the conduct of Priest and people in the days I am telling you of! The Priest believed then in his functions, and consequently approached them with trembling awe; his flock saw his awe, and then his faith found a bright reflection in their souls. Then there was indeed acknowledged but one LORD, one faith, one Baptism.

Old Abbot Theodore offered Holy Eucharist. The rich vestments had all been taken away by the brethren who had fled,—but one set had been retained for his use that day, and he stood vested in them at the altar. I will describe them to you briefly. Theodore had on a white alb, which was like a surplice with tight sleeves, symbolical of the seamless garment; at the foot, in front, it was richly embroidered. Over the alb was the stole, of green silk enriched with flowerwork of gold thread, and having a gold fringe: the ends of the stole—which represents

the yoke of CHRIST laid on the Priest's shoulders, appeared just below the chasuble, of green silk also, with beautifully worked border of vine-leaves. This was a sort of cloak, of an oval shape, with pointed ends, and a hole in the middle, through which the head was put, so that the garment hung down in a point in front and behind.

Theodore stood on the footpace, or step round the altar; on a lower step, facing east, were the Deacon Elfget and the Subdeacon Savinus, both young men; and a step below them, kneeling also with their faces towards the altar, were the boys Egelred and Ulric, in little white albs, fastened by a small girdle round their waists. All the other brothers and boys were on stone benches in the choir.

The office proceeded till it came to the Sanctus,—that is, the beautiful hymn, “Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD of Sabaoth,” etc.,—when shouts were heard at the great west door of the church, and a heavy blow fell against it. Elfget glanced timidly at Savinus, and Ulric's heart beat so fast that he could hardly support the candle in his trembling hand; but the celebrant, with unmoved voice, as the last note of the Sanctus died away, proceeded with the office.

His voice was now and then drowned in the clamour outside, as with their battle-axes the Danes strove to burst open the strong doors of the church. So loud was the din, that those in the choir could hardly hear when the Consecration prayer had begun. There was a hush out-

side the gates, however, at that awful portion of the service, as if a great dread had come even upon the hearts of the pagans when the Lord descended to His Throne among men, making Himself known to His chosen few in the breaking of bread.

Presently there was a shout outside, "Try fire!" and a moment afterwards a puff of smoke was wafted in through the chinks of the door. The brethren could hear the sharp crackle of the wood as it kindled: for the Northmen had ceased from shouting, and were quietly watching the progress of the flames, awaiting their opportunity of dashing through into the church.

Lethwyn was the first to see the little blue flame curl up under the door and then go out; a thick grey smoke was rolling up the building, and a strong smell of the burning wood. All in the church communicated, even down to little Tugarius, who was continually looking up timidly at his brother Lethwyn the Sub-prior, thinking far more of *his* danger than his own.

Just as the last had received, a great half of the door fell with a crash into the nave, casting up a cloud of smoke and sparks, and the Danes uttered a loud shout of exultation at the sight of their victims. One moment more, the fire was dashed aside in all directions, and they came pouring into the church with yells and cries which made the walls echo and ring.

In a moment, the brethren were scattered, most flying towards the Abbot to defend him.

Tugarius clung to Lethwyn ; Ulric and Egelred neither rose nor moved, but continued kneeling and praying.

"Now then, Sir Abbot! Out of the way with you crowding round him! By the Valkeri, if you must needs have it, we can but reap our way to him through the thick corn!" thundered Osketul, one of the kings who commanded the expedition ; and laying about him vigorously with the huge two-edged sword which he held with both his hands, he mowed the aged brethren down till he came in front of Theodore.

"Ah ha!" roared the gigantic Dane, "before-hand with us, hiding the treasures of the house! Bring us out your gold cups and idols! So! I relish a quaff of the glowing mead from your jewelled chalices. Bring them hither in a heap now directly, or by the shades of Odin we shall have the temple flaming over our heads."

The old man stood immoveable before the altar in his Eucharistic vestments, his grey hair falling in thin locks over his shoulders.

"Come!" cried Osketul, grasping him by the throat, and striking him in the chest violently with the handle of his huge sword.

Theodore bent with the pain, and the colour left his hale cheek for a moment ; but he soon raised himself, and fixing his grey Saxon eye on the intruder with a bold look of determination, said, "Never, sir king, never, so help me God and His hierarchy of angels.

A blow from the Dane broke all his teeth, and a stream of blood poured from his mouth.

In the mean time the other Danes were pursuing the terrified monks about the now burning church. Some had torn open the tombs of S. Guthlac, of Egbert, Alfreda, and other of the holy dead, in search of pillage. Savinus lay with his head cloven, and Elfget had a great wound in his side from the sword of King Godrun, and he lay bleeding to death on the altar-steps, trampled on by the pagans, who rushed over him to tear open the aumbry in search of the ecclesiastical vessels. The prior Asker lay a corpse in the vestry. The altar-steps were slippery with blood, and Egelred had fallen with a wound in his shoulder, Ulric was still kneeling.

"Now then, Sir Abbot!" cried Osketul, in a voice hoarse with fury. "It is of no use delaying to tell us, if we get not the news of where the treasures are from you, we will plough up the ground of the abbey and find them."

"You may do that, but never shall you hear from me where they be," replied Theodore, firmly. A blow on his head from the great sword of the King sent him staggering, he put his hand up to his eyes, as the blood rushed over them, when a second blow divided his head in two, and he fell, striking the altar with it so that the blood was sprinkled on the stone, and then he dropped down on the foot-pace. Osketul gave a loud fierce laugh and turned round, Ulric caught his eye, and a sweep of the great sword cut him down. Egelred had just raised his eyes and murmured, "Thou heavenly new

Jerusalem !” A bright smile of triumphant joy passed over Ulric’s beautiful face, and then he fell asleep. Egelred crept over towards him as well as he possibly could, and laid himself down beside him. Ulric’s taper was still burning on the ground, and his hands were clasped together, as they had been during the holy office. Egelred’s dying eye looked up at the roof of the church, the flames were creeping along it, great blazing beams fell now and then in the nave, which was consequently deserted by all but the dead and dying brethren. Still the shouts from the refectory and vestries were audible, and every now and then the bitter cry of a child, whom the savage Northmen were putting to torture, to try and discover where the treasures of the church were hidden : the boy’s life was fast ebbing away as the fire came roaring nearer and nearer, every now and then the flame seemed to leap along the roof and gush out fiercely in new places, the lead poured down in molten streams now and then, with a heavy plash on the stone floor, hissing in the blood which was sprinkled everywhere.

Suddenly a thought seemed for the moment to reanimate the dying boy. “Tugarius ! little Tugarius !” he cried faintly, and struggled to rise to his knees, but fell back again from weakness. “Oh Jesus !” he prayed, “save little Tugarius from the hand of the pagan, and bring him to meet Ulric and me in Thy Heavenly new Jerusalem.”

Then he put out his arm, and taking hold of

the dead hand of his friend, clasped it tightly in his own; and just before the central tower fell with a roar like thunder, the Heavenly new Jerusalem was won.

In the refectory was Lethwyn the sub-prior, with little Tugarius his brother, clinging to his hand. The younger Earl Sidroc was there, for he had pursued him through the cloisters into the hall.

"The plate!" shouted the Norseman, with his raised sword, "show me where it is!"

Lethwyn made the sign of the cross towards him in the air, and that was his only answer.

"Away with your incantations," exclaimed the enraged pagan, and his sword fell whistling through the air, and laid the sub-prior a corpse on the floor. Tugarius still clung crying to him. "Kill me also! O do kill me!" he cried in a piteous voice, "this is my own brother, wicked man! I am a Christian also, O for the kind Jesus' sake kill me!"

"By the Mitgard weirwolf!" exclaimed Sidroc, "that is a strange request; nay, thou wilt make a comely page to bear me the drinking horns at our feasts, come, child!" he cried, flinging his Danish cloak and hood over him, "follow my steps and I will save thee!" Tugarius helplessly crept closer to the body of his brother, but Sidroc tore him away. "Here comes Hubba, and I cannot save thee unless thou comest quickly; here take my shield, follow me," and he thrust it upon the child, and dragged him after him.

And thus it happened that little Tugarius was the only survivor of all who remained in the abbey, and he was doomed to follow the Danish camp.

On the third day after, the Danes marched to Mideshamstead Abbey, which they pillaged and burnt to the ground, and a few days later advanced towards Huntingdon.

"Ah, Tugarius!" said Sidroc one day to the little boy, as they were following in the rear of the troop, "Ah, thou wilt like our cold white fields, and the grim pines rising through the snow, and the rocks where the old bears hide; O it is a grand country is Nordland! there are wonders there, child, thou dreamest not of. There is the great Kraken of the sea which flings its long hundred arms round the masts and shrouds of a ship, and in a moment it is sucked down into the deep water; there are also the spirits of the forest and of the winds: thou canst hear old Loki moaning under the great mountains. Ah! thou wilt love the Norse-land and its great gods, child! We have grand temples to Odin of rock; but thou must give up this CHRIST—"

"O hold!" cried Tugarius, crossing himself, "Never! never!"

"Never!" exclaimed Sidroc, bending his dark brows on the child, "but I will it." Tugarius did not answer. "We shall have no worshippers of CHRIST in Nordland!" said the Earl, "Nay, not even a little one like thee: change thy faith thou shalt!"

"But," said the child, "JESUS is coming again one of these days to find His children, and He will call those who have been faithful and true to Him; Egelred and Ulric, and all the boys of S. Guthlac are gone to sleep in His fold where He keeps them safe now, and I must go there too. O think! if when they wake up they do not find me, how sorrowful they will be that all the boys should be taken into JESUS' arms, all but little Tugarius; O I never, never will give up the faith of JESUS CHRIST."

"Baldur the good and beautiful is coming again," said the Earl, "Loki bound him to a tree and shot at him, but he will return and slay the old serpent and the Mitgard wolf, and take vengeance on Loki."

"Who is Loki?" asked Tugarius, innocently looking up in his master's face.

"Loki was the most crafty of the gods of Valhalla," replied Sidroc, "and he hated the youthful and glorious Baldur, so he slew him with a sprig of misletoe; but Odin and Freya, and all the gods rose in rage from their banquet, and they drove Loki out from the glorious halls and chained him down under the grim old mountains, two serpents are placed over him, and their venom trickles down on his breast, till he turns in agony on the sharp rocks which are his bed; and that is he turning when the earth shakes, and his moan goes through the wild mountains of a night."

"Hast thou ever heard him moan?" asked the child, growing interested.

"Ay! and stranger things than that," replied the Earl; "on a starry night among the great pines, I have heard the spirits pass in the tree-tops; they went by like dark birds, with a low howl, and I saw them from the top of a rock I climbed, rushing away swiftly over the pine-tree tops, like the shadow of a cloud on a moor. Hold! what now?"

"The waggons are fast in the river," said a Norseman, riding up to the Earl.

"What the carts with the abbey plate?" exclaimed Sidroc, and he dashed on. In crossing the little Nene, one of the vehicles had upset in the stream, and another was so fast in the mud, that there was some difficulty in extricating it, the horses were alarmed, and plunged here and there, Sidroc cut their traces, and his men entered the water to unload the cart. At this juncture the thought of escape entered the child's head. He leaped from the horse Sidroc had mounted him on, and before any one had time to notice him, had crept away along some ditches, till he had got near a neighbouring wood, where he ensconced himself in a hollow tree.

He could hear the distant shouting of the Danes, and above all the powerful voice of the Earl Sidroc, but whether it was that they were calling him, or that they were still engaged in extricating the waggons and their valuable load, he could not tell. Night came on at length, and stealing from the wood, he made the best of his way across country to Croyland.

In the meantime the brethren who had fled to Encarig had returned, and were lamenting over the ruins of their house, and the death of all who had remained in it ; great was their joy therefore to see the bright, golden-haired Tugarius return, the sole survivor. "LORD, Thou hast delivered the soul of Thy turtle-dove from the multitude of the enemies," said one of the brothers.

"I have escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler," replied Tugarius, looking up into the deep skies with a grateful glow in his young countenance, "the snare is broken and I am delivered."

#### THE SONG OF THE CHORISTER.

The song of the little chorister boy  
In his garment of spotless white ;  
He singeth the sweet CHAIST-hymns by day,  
Which the angels sing all night.

The angels sing in the soft blue skies,  
And the chorister here on earth,  
But thither he mounts with his childish step,  
And song, from the day of his birth.

His voice in the old church where he sings,  
Like a bird's rises high and clear,  
Like a bird's it rings, it rises, it falls,  
Like a bird, he sings without fear.

In the church are the tombs of strange old folk,  
With their faces quiet and still,  
The voice of the chorister peals in their graves,  
With a wild and a wondrous thrill.

Meekly he kneels when the prayers are said,  
And he standeth to chant the Psalm ;  
And he bows his head with a childlike dread,  
Yet his soul's unruffled and calm.

If the good God let him tarry awhile,  
When his voice is broken and gone,  
Then the sweet old hymns of the Church will he  
Sing loud in his heart all along.

The fledglings open their mouths for food,  
Though the winds in the tree tops rave ;  
The chorister pines for the altar food,  
Which alone is able to save.

If the good God taketh the chorister boy  
To Himself in His boundless love,  
From chanting Miserere on earth,  
To sing Gloria far above ;

Then he crosseth his arms on his small white breast ;  
And his heart beats softly and mild ;  
They pull the bell of the grand old church,  
But it waketh no more the child.

Far, far away on a pavement of stars,  
In a robe of light will he stand,  
And sing Alleluia that never dies,  
With a bright gold harp in his hand.



## The Rock of Thor.

A.D. 981.

“



WONDER when our Thorwaldr will return?” said Kodran, an old Ice-lander, to his wife, who sat opposite to him by the fire. “Gilia is growing dreary without his shout; he has been a long time on his viking.”

“The great Odin defend him!” sighed Freymunda. “Perhaps he is feasting with the gods now.”

“A rough winter this,” murmured the aged warrior crouching nearer the fire, as a gust of wind roared past the house, driving the smoke down into the chamber.

After it had passed the two could hear it raving among the branches of the Vatnesdal wood, and the thunder of the great ocean on the coast came distinctly on their ears, as wave on wave was hurled against it with the violence of the whole swell of the mighty Polar Sea, so that

the very earth on which the house was built, trembled at each blow from the surge.

The wind gradually fell into low sobs about the eaves, and mingled wildly with the boom of the distant ocean.

Then followed a dead calm for a moment.

"May Odin bring him safely home!" said the old woman looking into the fire. "I cannot spare my Thorwaldr yet, a good and brave son he is!"

"Ay, that's true!" exclaimed the old man; and rising he took down from the wall a great copper shield with devices of silver inlaid on it. He began to burnish it meditatively, till it shone like fire.

"Look here, wife!" said Kodran, pointing to his shield, "it is like the sun in a storm; all but that figure of Thor's hammer shines like new metal; Thor is somehow angry with us."

"Thor is our son's great patron," said the old woman with a misgiving at her heart, "we have named him after the God."

"Perhaps Thor is angry with him and not with us."

"Hast thou offered thy cakes and mead at his rock, Kodran?" said Freymunda, looking up.

"Ay! I have," answered the old man, "but give me a cake and a can of mead; I will even now go to the rock and inquire of the god there: our son has been longer than is right away, all the vikings are over but his, all the sea horses are stabled but Thorwaldr's."

"It is a good boat, Kodran," said the wife,

"the Dragon has gone through many storms, and will not sink with Thorwaldr unless Thor is enraged and strikes with his hammer."

Then the old woman rose from her seat and went in search of an offering for the god. She soon returned with the requisites, and put them into her husband's hands. The two great dogs which had been crouching before the fire rose and shook their rough coats, and leaped up at Kodran.

"Down, Thorkel!" cried the old man. "Grimm, follow me." He opened the door, a gust of wind rushed into the room, and nearly threw him down; but setting his teeth, and pulling his fur Icelandic cap over his head, he strode out on the snow. The two hounds went with him, not dashing ahead and gambolling, but pacing along by his side with their matted hair tossing in the wind, their necks advanced, and their fierce red eyes fixed straight before them. Kodran came at length to a bold cliff which rose sheer out of the Húnaflói, a great northern bay of Iceland. There was no snow on the top, for the wind had blown it all off and disclosed the brown grass and heather.

Overhanging the sea was a huge granite rock poised on one point, and it rolled like a ship in a gale as the wind now swept over the platform on the top of the cliff with unabated fury, unrestrained by shelter of any kind; so the old man had to pause for breath before he could venture on the cliff exposed to the whole violence of the storm as it poured up from off the ocean.

The headland shivered and quaked with the lash of the great billows which were heaved against it, and sometimes the spray shot up in sheets into the air, and was whirled by the tempest in a deluge over the top. There were deep caverns at the bottom, and the old man could hear the boom of the waves as they poured into them far under his feet, then the clash like an earthquake when they were filled and the air in them driven out.

Kodran approached the huge rock which swung in the blast on its small pivot without falling, so beautifully was it balanced: he placed the cakes on a stone before it, and poured out the mead into a hollow scooped for the purpose. Then raising his voice he chanted as clearly as he could in the raging gale:—

“ The stripling’s shield’s a full pale moon,  
The victor’s glimmers dim in blood,  
The dead man’s shield is rent in twain—  
On brown moor lands beyond this flood.  
Above the wave the war ships stroll,  
Below the waves the sea-wolves hide;  
Whether in his deep bosomed boat,  
Or where the wierd snakes coil and glide,  
Dost thou Thorwaldr’s footsteps guide?  
Upon the earth the sea-kings stalk,  
Above, the pale ghosts shrieking fly;  
Whether upon the snow-draped land,—  
Or where the spirits sobbing lie,—  
Does our Thorwaldr shout or sigh?  
Guide his steps with meteor fire,  
If he hath wronged thee, forgive —”

At that moment a wild fearful shriek issued

from the stone—the dogs stood stiff and trembling with horror; then turning, with their tails between their legs they stole yelping away. Kodran's voice failed, and he followed them with a desponding heart to his home.

Freymunda looked anxiously into his face as he seated himself gloomily by the fire again; but the old man did not choose to say anything; so his wife reseated herself, and both were silent for a long while.

"Thor is angry," said Kodran, at length; "he has been injured by our son, and now perhaps Thorwaldr lies among the monsters of the deep."

The old woman groaned.

"It is so," said Kodran, "Thor is inexorable."

As he said this there was a loud joyous shout outside the house, a violent blow burst the door open, and the reflection of the fire fell on a young man of about twenty, with his light hair flowing in unadorned locks over his ears, his wild blue eyes flashing with excitement, and on an old man in a purple cassock with a thick dark cloak thrown over it, and the hood drawn close over his head.

"By Odin!" cried Kodran, leaping to his feet, "our Thorwaldr!"

"Oh father mine," shouted the young man in a loud clear voice, bounding at the same time into the room. "Oh the good mother! do not speak more to me of Odin, I am a Christian, ah, ah! mother mine, you know nothing of what

that means. But I have brought the good father with me, and we are going to baptize all the island, yet he cannot speak our Norse tongue now, so I am to preach for him!"

And Thorwaldr gave a boisterous hearty laugh, and seized his father's and mother's hands in his own till the tears came into their eyes with laughing and crying.

"May Thor bless thee, lad," exclaimed Freymunda, "but it is a bad thing to speak ill of Odin."

The young Iclander seized the old man who still stood in the door by both his shoulders, and swung him violently, yet with great good nature, into the room.

"This is the Bishop, father mine! Bishop Frederick, he has come all the way from Saxon land with me to make the good Icelandmen Christians; give him the chair, and bring on meat, for we are hungry."

The old hounds had been bounding about Thorwaldr expressing their wild joy at seeing him in every manner they could, till the youth flung away his cloak, and throwing himself on the ground rolled about fighting and playing with them, now and then roaring out a stave of some Norse melody, and bursting into loud shouts of laughter.

"The dear son is ever like himself," said the old woman, laughing through her tears, as she went out to fetch in some frozen reindeer meat, and dried fish.

The old Bishop smiled also, and the father

Kodran brought him a pair of wolf-skin leggings and shoes, which he put on, and felt warmer.

Freymunda put a vessel on the fire and poured in meal and barleycorns, then added fish, salt water, and rein-deer milk; she placed great horns mounted in silver on the table, and a large jug gushing over with mead which she had warmed.

The hearts of all were soon made glad by the repast, and Thorwaldr grew so joyous that the old couple could do nothing but laugh and weep in turns.

"Ah, dear son," said Kodran, lifting up the great copper shield, which glowed in the fire-light like a moon in thick mist. "I have been burnishing my ancient shield for thee, but Thor's hammer will not lose its rust, though I have rubbed it more than all the rest of the ornaments."

"Give it me," exclaimed Thorwaldr, snatching it from his father's grasp, and with the point of his dagger he dug the silver hatchet out of the shield.

"O son, what hast thou done!" cried his mother, in a voice of horror.

But the youth laughed and exclaimed, "Did I not tell thee, good mother, that I was now a Christian?"

But Kodran looked very wrathful, and flashes of fire came from his eyes, and he asked:

"What is a Christian, Thorwaldr?"

"That is what I long to tell thee, and the good Bishop has come for the purpose of telling

thee better than I can, but as yet he knows not our language. CHRIST, my father, is like our great Baldur. He is a GOD, and came down to earth, but the people hated Him and came upon Him in the night, and bound His hands, and led Him away."

"Did He fight?" asked Kodran.

"No," replied his son, "He it was who made this earth, and sea, and sky, and the storm."

"Why did He not bring a great storm, and thunder on the people to slay them?"

"Because He would not, He wanted to save them, not to kill them. Thou knowest, my father, that men are bad, some are cowards, some get over-wrathful and kill their brothers, others do not fight openly in the day, but creep about in shadows; and the great CHRIST came to save all these with the rest of men, and bring them to His Valhalla."

"But why did He suffer Himself to be taken?"

"The great GOD will let no cowards and wicked men come to His Valhalla, and men are of nature bad, so He required a sacrifice for the sins of all the world; the holy and good CHRIST, His SON, came down to be that sacrifice that He might draw all men with Him to His bright Kingdom. Then the people nailed Him to a great tree and killed Him."

"What!" exclaimed Kodran, his eyes flashing fire, "and He did not strike them with hail or thunder! I would have—"

"So thou would'st, my father," replied Thorwaldr, "but was it not braver, to be able to

break the world in pieces at one word and revenge Himself on the people, and not to do it though they laughed at and mocked Him, and cut His Hands, and Feet, and Side !”

“Ay, ay !” said the old woman, shaking her head, “that was a very brave thing.”

“And the Bishop and I are going to try to make all Iceland worship the Brave CHRIST,” shouted Thorwaldr joyously, and he clapped his hands together with glee.

“Thou shalt be baptized, old father, and thou also, little mother.”

But the good couple shook their heads and said nothing.

The winter gradually drew to a close, and the Bishop and Thorwaldr remained with Kodran, who was gradually being converted to the faith which is in CHRIST. His son urged him repeatedly to be baptized, and spoke to him of JESUS in his wild earnest manner, which rude as it was, carried conviction with it to the old man’s simple mind ; and the Bishop had begun to speak the language, and consequently was enabled to do something himself. Once, while the party were gathered round the fire, Kodran began to speak about the matter in a quiet earnest manner.

“Thor and Loki are gods, my son, I know, and what I should wish to learn is whether the good CHRIST is greater and more powerful than they are : they have spoken to me from the great rock many a time ; now dost thou think that thy CHRIST could cast Thor out of the

stone as He cast the spirits out of the dumb man the Bishop told me of."

"Wilt thou be baptized, father, if I and the Bishop break down the rock, and Thor never harms us?"

"Better have nothing to do with the Rock of Thor," said Freymunda anxiously.

"Nay, little mother," laughed Thorwaldr, "Thor and I will but try who is the stronger."

"My son," exclaimed the Bishop solemnly, "my son, Thor will conquer thee then."

"I forgot, good father," answered the wild Iceland, humbly bowing his head, "it is not I, the glorious CHRIST will overcome Thor."

Still the old people shook their heads.

"Now, father!" cried Thorwaldr, seizing his hatchet, and a strong iron bar, "follow thy son, he is going to break down the great stone."

"Hold! hold!" said Kodran anxiously.

"Nay!" shouted the youth, dashing his matted locks out of his eyes, "Thou wilt be baptized if the glorious CHRIST conquers Thor." And he thrust the door open and went out. The Bishop, Kodran, Freymunda followed, and with them the aged Hlenni and his grandson Onund, Thoruad, Eyolf, and some others who were in the house at the time listening to the teaching of the Bishop and Thorwaldr.

It was the close of the long winter months and the snow lay rather thinner on the ground. In the sky shone the brilliant Aurora, giving life to the twilight; it extended in an arch spanning the north, now sending out arms of

white fire, now quivering and throbbing in pulses of light varying from greenish yellow to red and blue.

The party after a long walk reached the great stone, it was motionless now, the sea moaned far below floating great blocks of ice towards the cliff against which they crashed. In the twilight the coast line and its broken headlands round the Húnaflói were faintly seen; westward the pale waters of the Breide Fjord shone like a plate of steel, and now and then the meteoric gleams lit up the white glacier of Dranga Jökul in the distance across the bay.

All of the party evinced some awe in approaching the dreaded rock of Thor except the Bishop, and Thorwaldr who shouted joyously and flourished his axe above his head. A few great strides brought him up to it and he raised his hatchet.

Bishop Frederick came up and made the sign of the Cross over the stone. Thorwaldr threw himself on his knees, put his hands together, and fixing his large blue eyes far away in the sky where the Aurora was quivering in its glorious arc, uttered a wild prayer. "O CHRIST, conquer grim Thor and cast him out of snowy Iceland!" Then he sprang to his feet, the axe flashed like summer lightning around his head, and a faint chime rang through the rock as the blow fell on the pivot.

"See, see!" shouted Thorwaldr pushing the stone,— "Thor's rock will move no longer."

He flung down the axe and grasping the iron bar tried to heave the huge block over the edge

of the cliff. Onund put out his hand and helped him, and Eyolf, seeing that Thor showed no signs of avenging himself for the insult, assisted also. Then the Bishop lifted up his rich deep voice and chanted :—

“The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice: let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. . . . The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship Him, all ye gods,” &c.

And so he chanted all through the beautiful Ninety-seventh Psalm. The great rock moved, rolled on one side with a crushing sound, and as the three men gave a cry of joy it fell over the edge into the sea.

Freymunda unclasped her hands from her eyes and looked about, half expecting fire to fall from heaven and burn them up, but the sky remained as still and dim as before. Then she sprang up to her son, and cast herself on his breast. Kodran grasped the Bishop's hand and pressed it warmly.

“It is a good thing,” said he, “that my son Thorwaldr hath brought thee here; for our gods who dwell in these stones are cowards and cannot revenge themselves. I cast them off, and henceforth will worship none but the glorious CHRIST; do thou teach me how to do so!”

When the sun began to appear, and the island

to shake off its winter gloom, when the blue butterwort began to sprout on the edges of the Jökuls, then were Thorwaldr's parents, Onund, Hlenni, Eyolf, and several others baptized, and these were the first converts to the Church of CHRIST in Iceland.







## The Flight of Wild Fowl.

A.D. 985.



OUR years have passed away since Thorwaldr and the Bishop Frederick first entered Iceland, and by the grace of GOD there had been great ingatherings into the Church since then.

In the meantime that these two laboured, the pagans had grown alarmed and exasperated at the numbers which the Bishop was converting, and like some of old, they wondered where these things would end.

It was summer; at the stone of Logberg most of the Icelandic jarls were assembled in consultation. The place of gathering was surrounded on two sides by deep-fissures in the ground formed by volcanic agency, these were filled with deep black water, still and dead, which uniting at an angle left a smooth tongue of green grass-land dappled with daisies, the butterwort and

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sundew flourished in the most damp spots, and occasionally there shone the little white primula from among the damp moss.

The great stone of Logberg was of lava rock, it was what the Celts would have called a menhir, and was an obelisk of unhewn stone. Round this the chief men of the island were gathered, consulting on what should be done to extirpate Christianity from the island.

Among the most violent was Orm, the brother of Thorwaldr, who lived at Borgarfjord; his advice was that a band of men should be sent directly after his brother and the Bishop, and that they and the converts who lived in the same house at Hegranes should be destroyed: the house was of wood, and might easily be set fire to while they were asleep. There was some discussion about this; but at length it was agreed to, as the most ready way of extirpating the new faith from the island.

Accordingly a band of two hundred men fully armed, and mounted on horses, was sent for the purpose, and they were to ride direct to Hegranes and set the house on fire when the Bishop and Thorwaldr were within, and were to drive them back into the flames if they attempted to escape.

You see the army of men marching against the servants of the LORD of Hosts; and it was His will to deliver His servants out of the hand of their enemies, for He had much work for them still to do in Iceland. We will follow the band.

You see them riding in good order on their wild steeds; they are crossing a lava district now, it is covered with huge blocks of this rock, and the road is made with prodigious labour, great stones are laid down as a pavement, and the projecting ends are broken off;—sometimes the way goes over a bed of lava which has been worn smooth by constant traffic. Over this road is a bed of earth which has been brought from some distance, but this is in many places washed away, and exposes the black rock underneath.

No vegetation is to be seen here; you may well imagine this is no easy travelling, and the horses have to proceed slowly over the rough path. Presently the lava blocks get fewer, and a small crop of plants peer between them; then the road has to cross a brawling torrent, the water foaming and eddying through a gash in the black rock, its colour a cold blue, showing its source to be in the snows.

A single fir plank spans this, and one by one the horses have to cross; some refuse, and have to be dragged forcibly over.

Then the scenery changes; all around is the most vivid green, the turf smooth and unbroken; hard by a wood,—at least it is what they call a wood in Iceland, we in England should hardly deign to call one of the little stunted shrubs which grow there, a tree, yet they are the only ones in that island, not much taller than a man, and quite twisted and distorted. The sun was now near setting, and the troop had ridden far; they were

at no great distance from the town of Loekiamot, and their captain ordered a halt to rest the horses and men; they did not wish to enter the town for fear of the news of their journey reaching the Bishop before them, and giving him time to escape.

The sun set,—in a moment every sound was hushed, the flies which had been buzzing about a moment before, folded their wings and were silent, a gerfalcon which had been screaming aloft wheeled round and darted to its eyrie. A cold grey shadow ran over the prospect,—but it was only for a moment; almost directly it reappeared a bright spark on the horizon, and rose steadily up the sky.

Such was an Icelandic summer night.

Now for a moment see how Thorwaldr and the Bishop are passing it. Their's is a small wooden house, the timbers but roughly joined together and the interstices stopped up with fat and sand.

There is an oratory which Thorwaldr has constructed with his own hands at the east end of the house: a rude wooden cross stands on a small altar, and before it hangs a lamp fed with seal oil.

Thorwaldr is kneeling before it, his large blue eyes fixed earnestly on the cross, round whose arms he has twined a wreath of summer flowers; the Bishop has taught him some beautiful prayers for midnight, and these he repeats, singing them as loud as he can, making the whole house ring with his clear sonorous voice. Pre-

sently Bishop Frederick enters and going up to the altar celebrates the Blessed Sacrament, Thorwaldr assisting as acolyth, and having the bell ; but instead of gently tinkling it, he rings it so violently as quite to drown the Bishop's voice and nearly deafen him.

So that watch of the night is passed,—little do either of them know how that at the same time two hundred men are on their way to burn them in their house.

Now we will return to them : they are just preparing to continue their march, refreshed with their slight rest, the horses are untethered, the saddles girt up tighter, the soldiers preparing to mount ; in a short while they may be surrounding the house of Thorwaldr.

But God had not so ordained it.

They are mounting their horses,—suddenly over the hill comes a flight of wild fowl screaming and flapping their wings as they rush in a dense body onwards. Any one who has heard a flight passing will remember well the wild horrible noise they make, their cries, and the rushing sound of their wings in the air.

A sudden fear seizes the horses, they rear and plunge here and there, some rush about madly, dragging their masters after them, others throw them on their backs, who in falling wound themselves with their own weapons ; trampling down the fallen, wild and frightened, the horses tear about ; on all sides are the cries and execrations of the soldiers who have legs and arms broken, the snorting of the maddened horses, and above,

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the screaming, and rushing of a thousand wings.

Not one of that troop passed through Loekiamot, but the bruised and wounded, and those few who had by good fortune escaped, returned in disorder to their homes, and never more did the Icelanders endeavour to assault the Bishop or Thorwaldr, but left them to continue their mission in peace.

Thus then did the simple creatures of God fulfil His will and confound the enemies of His servants.

Surely the angel of the LORD tarrieth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.





## The Escape of S. Magnus.

A.D 1095.



THE Orkney Isles is the scene to which I wish to transport you now, and to the rough beach of one of them. Wild enough the rocks are, and fantastic enough in their shapes, running up into sharp crags, with scarcely any stunted grass on their tops, or jutting out into the sea in strange groups, pierced here and there with sea-worn arches through which the waves tumble and roar in a storm. The water was now, however, clear and transparent, so that the shadows of the numerous fishes were thrown on the bright sand at the bottom as they darted here and there through it. You might have seen the ungainly little olive-green crabs shuffling about in their peculiar manner among the brilliant crimson seaweed; on the dry shingle, moreover, were many fresh sparkling shells, still glistening with the water, perhaps also a starfish or two; and the

beach was covered with the burrowing traces of the little sand eel.

The ridges of rock running out into the water which were covered at high-tide, were thickly incrustated with limpets, and in their pools lived numerous sea anemonies, barnacles, and forests of the most exquisite weeds. Floating on them too, you might see occasionally the fairy-like little nautilus, its transparent wings fringed with the most delicate purple line. The ripple ran in a long clear line upon the shore, and hardly rattled the shingle, but made every pebble look like a precious stone.

On a little bit of turf which sloped towards the shore sat John the aged Bishop of Hòla, and the youthful Magnus who afterwards became a great saint.

Magnus was the son of the jarl (or chief) Erlendr, whose brother's name was Páll. Erlendr and Páll governed the island, but as they had grown old their sons had broken out into frequent contentions and strife, which had ended in Hako the son of Páll being turned out of the island.

Magnus and his brother Erlingr remained.

The Bishop was apparently rebuking Magnus, for there were tears in the young man's blue eyes, and a stern gravity on the peaceful countenance of the venerable prelate.

"Ah, Magnus, my son!" said the Bishop with a deep sigh, "I remember well when thou wast wont to sit on my knee and listen to the holy stories from God's Book with quiet faith, and

when thou wentest to learn, thou didst ever strive to serve God with all thy powers, and to show a bright example to thy fellow school-boys, but thou hast fallen away."

"O my father!" cried Magnus, bitterly, "I know and confess my sin in striving with Hako, but he ever provoked me, and then we came to arms."

"A holy Apostle once said—'Let brotherly love continue:' there was no brotherly love in thee," said John.

"I know my fault," said Magnus, humbly, "it has been confessed to thee, wherefore dost thou withhold absolution from me?"

"Thou hast not searched thy heart deeply enough, my son," answered the venerable man, "one great sin thou hast never mentioned."

"What was that?" asked the youth, looking suddenly up.

"Where wast thou last spring, Magnus?"

"At a viking with my brother and other jarls," replied the young man.

"And dost thou not tremble at that sin, my son? what didst thou do? sail to a foreign people's land, and carry off their sheep and goods, perhaps slay them when they resisted. Is that no sin?"

"But father!" pleaded Magnus, "it is the way every jarl does in Orkney and Norway; they gain their wealth by it, and great names; his is but a mean and little name who fears to go on a viking."

"But that doth not make the sin the less,"

replied the Bishop. "What thou takest is another's, therefore is it stealing, if thou fightest and slayest thy foe in defending his own, thou committest murder."

"Oh! I understood it not as I see it now," cried Magnus, bitterly, "I confess it all, absolve me now, my father."

"Penitence must work amendment," said the Bishop; "I cannot absolve thee yet, remember what trials are before thee, scorn, ridicule, and the hatred of thine own relations if thou givest up these piracies."

"I will give them up; with God's help I will," said Magnus, looking straight into the sky.

"Then God bless thee, and strengthen thee to the trial, which will be harder than thou thinkest for. What ships are there in the offing?"

"I know not, father," said Magnus, shading his eyes to look at them.

"Meet me here to-morrow morning, my son," said the aged Bishop, and rising from the turf he walked slowly away leaning on his staff. A harder trial than he expected *was* prepared for Magnus.

GOD very often suffers us to be very seriously tested at once when we have made a good resolution, but the trial comes in a way we hardly expected it. Magnus, however, was prepared for it, he had knelt down on the sands and prayed directly the Bishop had left him, his boyhood had been pure and spotless, and he had early trained his body to self-denial, and although

as he came to manhood he had fallen away, and been led into contentions with Hako, and into the piratical expeditions which were common then, yet the seeds of early holiness remained.

The ships the Bishop had seen were those of Magnus Barbeins, King of Norway, on a marauding expedition; he now came to the Orkneys to place his little son Sigurd of nine years old over them, and to send Erlendr and Páll prisoners to Norway.

Next morning Magnus rushed down to the beach and found the Bishop of Høla awaiting him.

"O father!" he cried bitterly, when he saw him, "what can I do? my father, uncle, and sister are going to be sent away to Norway, and the king intends taking Erlingr and me with him on a viking expedition to the coasts of Britain and Ireland. I must go, for I cannot escape him. Hako is with him also."

"My child," said the old man, trembling for the soul of Magnus, "forget not that it is a sin to fight against those who have not injured thee; therefore do thou what is right, and God will help thee: wilt thou give up thy resolutions or continue in them?"

Magnus raised the cross hilt of his sword to his lips, and then holding it before his eyes threw himself down on his knees. "With God's help," said he firmly, "I will continue in my determination."

Whether he did or not you shall see if you follow me to the Great Orm's Head.

The fleet of Magnus Barbeins was off Anglesea, which he intended to ravage; but the Welshmen had heard of his approach, and the two Earls, Hugh the Fat and Hugh the Prude were awaiting him with a hastily gathered fleet.

A steady breeze was passing over the sea, raising small crisp wavelets with frothing crests; a line of white foam ran round the dim grey cliffs of Priestholn, here and there over the reefs and old causeway the waves leaped and danced, the gulls stampped low on the water dipping their feet in the green wave, and then sailing off to wheel round the great ship 'Kraken,' which bore Magnus Barbeins.

The low shore of the Cantrew y Gwaelad was distinctly visible, every cottage and fisherman's boathouse was as clear as if the coast were far nearer; further north rose the Great Orm's Head, or Ynys Tudno covered with a scanty growth of short grass, the rock rising sheer up from the shore, crowned by the quaint little Church of S. Tudno. There was the broad Conway estuary with the famed hill and castle of Dingonwy rising by its bank; beyond, the wild piles of mountains, the crest of Carnedd Llewellyn and the blue Snowdon range.

The bold jagged side of Penmaen Maur rose up out of the plain which is now submerged, and Penmaen Bach above the Conway with the steep rock Trwyn y Wylfa or 'the watch-point' on its side towering above the ancient palace of Helig ab Glenawg.

From the top of the Orm's Head the two

fleets looked like a covey of wild fowl disporting itself on the waves.

One might have known that a battle was expected on board the Kraken from the noise and rushing to and fro of the sailors and warriors. The king fully equipped in his savage-looking armour strode up and down the deck giving his orders.

"Now Widkund, where are your grappling irons? remember well to cast them directly we come next the earl's ship; Serkr, have the boat ready; when we grapple with the ships do thou let go the boat, leap in with a dozen men, and climb the deck of the enemy on the other side. Magnus, where art thou? Come, arm thee, lad, and get thy great sword! I see Hako fully harnessed on the prow of the Solan."

Magnus rose from his seat in the forepart of the ship; "I cannot fight, King Magnus," said he; "these Welshmen have done me no harm, so I will not wet my hands with their blood."

Magnus Barbeins drew back a step in mute astonishment.

"Not fight!" he exclaimed at last, "by Odin thou art a pretty coward, afraid of the sound of steel."

"In a just cause I fear it not," replied Magnus, quietly.

"Get thee downstairs where sword or arrow will not hurt thee; by my beard! I wist not that I had a young girl on board."

"Nay," answered Magnus, "I am no coward, I will remain here through the fight."

"That will soon begin," shouted the king, rushing away.

The ship of the Welsh Earl Hugh the Prude was nearing, there came a large wave rolling on, it raised the Norwegian pirate vessel, and drove it against the British ship; at the clash a yell rose on both sides, grappling irons were flung from either directly, but before the Norwegians could clamber on board their foe's vessel which was rather loftier than their own, Hugh, followed by a number of his men had swung himself over his bulwarks and dropped on the deck of the Kraken.

King Magnus drew his bow, and his arrows fell among the Britons; he was standing near the young Magnus who had drawn out his Psalter, and his clear, beautiful voice was heard chanting, when there was a lull in the thunder of the battle; now and then the waves dashed the two ships so violently against one another that the jar nearly threw the combatants from their feet; the darts flew in all directions, the great British Earl clothed in complete mail hewed down the Norse pirates with his huge double-edged sword, which swept right and left whistling through the air.

Magnus Barbeins fired arrow after arrow at him, they but flew off from his mail without injuring him, part of his face was visible, his grand brow with some grizzled locks curling over it, and his large, noble eyes flashing with the excitement of battle.

"By the soul of my father!" exclaimed the

king, "that man bears down all before him, is there none to help me? Ho!" he cried to a Helogolander who stood by, "do you aim at his face with me."

The man lowered his bow as the ship rolled, he waited till there was even motion, then he quietly raised it, at the same moment the string of Magnus Barbeins' bow twanged. Hugh uttered a cry, and staggered back, both arrows quivered in his face, one had entered his eye, the other was just below it.

A Briton rushed up to his assistance and caught him as he fell; but the king was there as soon, with his sword flashing over his head, and in another moment had flung the corpse of the earl into the sea. At the same moment Serkr was in possession of the enemies' vessel, and the victory was complete. Magnus closed his Psalter, and turning his face eastward gave thanks for his preservation.

The king had previously constituted him his page on account of his great beauty and grace; but now, day after day only increased his dislike for the young man; he believed it to be cowardice which withheld him from fighting, and among Norsemen it was the deepest disgrace to be considered cowardly.

The continual piracy brought the courage of Magnus into daily trial, and as he still refused to join in any of the marauding expeditions, the king became more exasperated than ever, while the young man dreaded for himself lest he should at length be led into the commission of the sin.

The fleet coasted Scotland plundering everywhere ; it now dropped with the tide into one of those lovely little arms of the sea which wind among the islets on the west coast of Scotland. On either side rose one of those islands, wildly beautiful with rock and blooming heather whose balmy sweetness was fanned down by the evening breeze, if such the slight breath of wind which stirred might be called. The water lay calm and unruffled like some dead mountain tarn ; the shadows in it were of a deep purpley black : inland, the mountains rose up against a bank of bright cloud which was bathed in the softest pink by the setting sun ; and the rocks were flushed with a rosy glow ; here and there flocks of white sheep were visible basking in the yellow sun, although the tinkle of their bells came not down so low as the sea, while the bases of the mountains and the lake-like inlet were in twilight, and a thin vapour was beginning to rise. Green patches of moss and fern on the hill-slopes showed the track of a little stream which at length dived under a mass of rock and falling over the scarp of a black cliff fell in a thin white thread with a faint cool splash, and was lost on the narrow beach.

Magnus had crouched in the bows of the ship among some sails, he looked down into the dim waters as they rippled past the prow, the vessel being at anchor, and the tide flowing out ; the last bloom of the sky was reflected over the ship throwing it into deep gloom, the soft dun hue on the hill side was as accurately mirrored in the clear tide.

The dusk became deeper ; a stray moth from the shore fluttered about Magnus' head ; far out on the mountain side where during the day a thin mist of blue smoke had hung, now shone a red star, where a peat fire was smouldering away.

Every now and then the scream of an owl from the shore rang over the dim waters.

The faint mist stole along the hill thickening and drooping, stretching itself from pine to pine, and the chill came over Magnus, leaving the light dew on bulwark and sail.

Suddenly the voice of the king and the tread of two people on the deck, broke the silence.

Magnus Barbeins and Widkund came to the prow and looked over into the water at the reflection of the red star, then up at the little fire on the mountain side itself.

"There are few on this part of the coast, Widkund," said the king ; "we must run further up, it is hardly worth landing here ; I suspect there are no inhabitants on this wild shore."

"Look at yon fire," said Widkund.

"Send one of the men to it, and see if there be any cabins in the neighbourhood ; he might pick up some news, and hear whether there are any farms worth plundering."

"Send that coward Magnus Erlingson ! I hate the fellow," exclaimed the king hastily, not noticing the youth who was lying near. "By Odin I wish he and his grim priestly conscience were safe at the bottom of this black water ; I think, Widkund, I shall trust him to thy mercy,"

said the king laughing; "if thou canst sink him quietly in the deep waves, thou wouldst rid me of a hated object, and the Orkneys of the prospect of a saint king."

Widkund chuckled quietly and stroked his long grey beard. The two then turned and walked aft.

Magnus lay still for a few minutes, then he stole down to his berth, placed the bolster in it and drew the skins over it so that to all appearance he was in his bed, and then mounting the deck again he quietly slung himself over the side and dropped into the water.

No one noticed him as he swam ashore,—the ripple ran fresh and cool around as he noiselessly at each stroke broke the reflection of star after star.

Unwearied, but rather braced for his flight, he stood but a moment to shake off the superfluous water from his long hair and scanty garments, and then throwing his head back bounded off over the moor through the cool night wind which fluttered his hair as he ran.

Unfortunately his feet were bare, so that the sharp prickles of the gorse wounded him, and at length treading on a sharp stone he cut his foot so severely that he with difficulty was enabled to limp into a neighbouring wood, where having found a tree suitable for his purpose, he climbed it and rested himself among the boughs.

Morning dawned, and Magnus endeavoured by the returning light to bandage up his bleeding foot.

In the meantime, all in the ships were stirring, the king paced up and down the deck, and wanting his page for some purpose, sent a man to call him. He returned with the answer that he was in bed, and seemed to be ill, for he had made no reply to him when he had spoken to him.

When the king found out he had been deceived, he was furious; and ordered a boat to be let down at once; he entered it with Widkund, Serkr, and others, and took with him a couple of bloodhounds, which he let loose on the shore.

It was not long before they came up to the tree where Magnus was hidden. His heart sunk when he saw them howling and leaping about the trunk, trying vainly to scramble up; he felt certain that their barking and yelling would soon lead the king to where he was concealed; there was a bough on which he was leaning, which bent so low as to touch the ground, one of the furious animals endeavoured to climb along this, but Magnus by changing his position suddenly raised the branch and flung the hound to the earth,—the dogs rushed again at the tree and strove to gnaw at the roots, the foam was dropping from their mouths, and their eyes were red with rage, if they could have reached him they would have torn him in pieces. Just then Magnus heard the shout of the king in the distance, and the dogs renewed their howling; he clasped his hands together and prayed with the vehemence of despair that he

might be permitted to escape in order to complete his penitence for past sins ; then breaking off a stick from the tree he threw it with all his might at the dogs ; it hit one on the head, and setting up a dismal howl, it slunk away with its tail between its legs : the other followed it, and both were soon running at full speed to the shore. The king and Widkund in vain tried to urge them on a second time, the animals skulked up to the boat and tried to clamber in.

“ Let the cowardly brutes alone ! ” cried the king, as a man was endeavouring to lead them back. “ We will go in pursuit of the runaway ourselves.”

And then he and Widkund took the wrong direction, and soon lost their way among the hills.

Magnus, directly the dogs had gone, leaped down from the tree, and the pain in his foot having abated, he soon cleared so much ground that all danger of being overtaken was at an end.

Faint and fatigued some days afterwards he presented himself before Melkoff, king of Scotland, and was kindly received by him.

Then did Magnus set himself to work to review his past life amid tears and groans, as his pious historian says,—“ He began to plough up the field of his heart with the share of contrition ; then he slew the old man of his infirmities and hid him in the sand ; he buried the idols of Laban under the roots of the tree ; he garnished himself with noble virtues, with good works well

pleasing to God, and with manly constancy. He began as the olive to grow, and increase in all good things and worthy deeds ; as the cypress towers over the other trees of the wood, thus flourished holy Magnus so that he became really magnus (great) as well in name as in virtue, mounting higher in prosperity and holiness."







## The Legend of S. Elizabeth.

A.D. 1223.



**HERE** we least expect it, God often loves to show His power. We are growing so mistrustful of Him and His presence with the suffering saints on earth, that many of the beautiful stories we hear, of how He revealed His might, and stretched forth His Arm in olden times, are doubted by us: and yet there is much to learn in those beautiful legends, even in those which may not be true; and if we look upon them with an eye to reading a lesson in them, and not to questioning their truth, they will teach us much. I am going to tell you a story, which I wish you to read thus: for, although I cannot be sure of its truth, yet I should be very sorry to deny its having ever happened.

It is Lent among the cold mountains of Hun-

gary ; the snow is gradually thawing and falling in masses from the dark arms of the mountain pine ; here the deep drifts which fill a gully are honeycombed with the thaw, and there the thin surface is browned with the washings of the soil from above. In some places the snow lies still in smooth white patches, only marked by the little footprints of the rabbit, mountain goat, or wild bird. The grey rocks are emerging rapidly from their white Christmas pall ; the marmot is uncurling itself from its long winter sleep ; the hairy mountain anemone may be found already blooming in patches on some of the exposed rocks ; and in swampy places the damp leaves of the blue butterwort, or the taper stem and sparkling hairs of the sundew ; in the clefts, also, the strange shoot of the fern is visible, rolled up like a sleeping animal in the long months of cold ; while the copse is already alive with the delicate asphodel. There is a little rugged path winding down the side of the Wartburg, towards the high roofs of Eisenach, which lies below, by the meadows on the water side. It is not a large place ; there is a church, with a quaint gabled tower, and a small religious house hard by, with a spirelet and bell to the chapel, planted in the middle of the roof ; there is just visible, also, the beautiful market cross, with its chaste ironwork palisade. The streets are straggling, and arranged without much order, with a church in each, nearly.

The snow is still here and there on the shady sides of the tall roofs ; but in the sun, the eaves

are continually dripping. A stork has been seen a day or two ago flying overhead : so there must be plenty more at hand ; they will revisit their nests on the chimney tops, and find them unmolested,—for what German would injure a stork's nest ?—and the eaves will also be the resort of numerous swallows ; and their strange mud nests will be filled with little living hearts soon, for spring is fast advancing.

A child has found a few crocus flowers in the meadow near the river, and some blue primulas near the pine grove just under the Lion's Rock ; he has made a lovely little bunch of them.

" Ah, Ludwig !" says his mother, " who is that for ?"

" For the dear Lady Elizabeth," answers the child, holding up the young flowers.

Who is the Lady Elizabeth, do you want to know ? Do you see that beautiful old castle on the Wartburg, with its dark towers casting shadows on the mountain ? The Lady Elizabeth lives there. Do you see that large gabled building near the strong castle gate ? That is the hospital, where the poor sick get warmth and attendance, under her own gentle eye.

But all the while I have been telling you this, the Lady Elizabeth has been coming down the little rugged pathway, with a faithful maiden walking behind her : they both seemed to be laden with some things which they bore in their mantles.

" Ah, Ysentrude," said Elizabeth, " how glad

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am I that the winter is nearly over, for the poor have suffered sorely by it."

"What would they have done without thee, dear mistress, and thy bounty?" said her servant.

"Nay, Ysentrude, God would have raised up another to assist them; I from my soul thank Him that He hath chosen me."

"But dost thou not feel tired through descending this rough path so often in the day, and in all weathers? My heart fails me when I hear the wind blow cold, and when the sharp hail is falling: and yet thou dost not seem to mind it much."

"O dear sister," answered Elizabeth, "what is it to the sweetness of the widow's blessing, and the love of the young children whom we feed and cherish?"

"This burden is heavy now," sighed Ysentrude, as her foot tripped over a root of pine in the path.

"I do not feel mine," answered the lady, "let me take some of the bread thou carriest."

"Nay! nay!" exclaimed the maid, "dear mistress, thou bearest more than I do at present, and I will not suffer thee to add more to it."

"How glad I shall be to see the little lame child again," said the duchess; "she suffers sadly, yet with such sweet patience as to teach us a lesson."

"And the little leper boy!" said Ysentrude.

"Ah, dear sister," sighed Elizabeth, "their blessings are more than I feel is fair to me;

have you ever stood beneath an apple tree in first flower and shaken it, and seen how the white leaves fall like snow about the head? It is like the prayers and love of these children covering one."

"Oh, look!" exclaimed the servant, pointing over the pine grove toward the east.

The western sun had lighted up the line of silvery mountains, till they blushed like roses, melting into the soft air, half lost in it and the delicate clouds which rolled there. Nearer, was a spur of the Wartburg, standing out dark against them with its gloomy mass of firs, and beneath it a grove of old oaks, which stood leafless above the snow, grey with the falling shades of evening. A slender stream was gliding along in the middle of the little dell between the path and the forest of pines.

"Look!" said the maid, "thy stream has already broken through the ice, and is murmuring down in the field where we find those lilies and narcissuses; I see poor folk about the chapel awaiting thee."

"Is our little lame child's mother there, do you see, Ysentrude?"

"I do not know, dear mistress. How lovely the distant hills look!"

"They seem like Heaven," said Elizabeth, raising her eyes toward them. "Oh!" sighed she, after a pause, "I hope no one will meet us."

"The Landgrave would be grieved at seeing his lady treading this road with a burden of barley loaves."

"Nay," answered Elizabeth, "I think not: but we should strive not to be seen of men, when we do our poor alms."

"I heard the Grand Duchess Sophia complaining to him that you were continually coming hither to distribute food to the sick. She said that—that—that you gave yourself unnecessary pains, dear lady, about it; that you risked the contamination of the lepers, and wasted the food which was intended for your own retainers."

"She meant it for the best," answered Elizabeth, meekly: "but what said my dear lord thereto?"

"He seemed annoyed; and she added other things, so that I trow he was not over well pleased."

The colour died in Elizabeth's cheek.

"I would not give him pain," said she, "for anything of this poor world: but then these poor would perish if I did not bring them food day by day."

"But, dearest lady, why not send it them by a menial?"

"Nay, Ysentrude," answered the Duchess gently, "and have it noised abroad of my charity! We must rather not have the right hand know what the left hand doeth; yet hold!——" She suddenly turned by a ledge of rock, covered in summer with the dark-eyed cistus, and met her husband Louis, coming along the path.

The colour came and went in the beautiful Elizabeth's face, as he looked at her with sur-

prise. She stood before him with her gentle head bowed down, and some of her dark hair showing under her hood. She wore a delicate silk mantle, which was wrapped round the loaves she bore in her bosom.

"Why, Elizabeth!" exclaimed her husband, in astonishment, "I am surprised to see thee here at evenfall: thou shouldst be in the castle now. Wherefore wandering hither? It is neither right nor seemly for a Landgrave's wife to be walking the mountains at night, and bearing heavy burdens, forsooth! what hast thou there in thy mantle?"

Poor Elizabeth slightly trembled; a tear stole into her eye, as the moon steals up above a hill-top, into the blue sky. Never before had her dear husband spoken so harshly to her; and she drew her mantle, containing the wheat and barley loaves, nearer her heart.

"Nay, Elizabeth!" said the Landgrave, rather hastily, mistaking her action, "Is it anything thou art ashamed of showing to me, or is it food for those lepers and cripples I saw hard by the chapel in the field of lilies? Nay, I *will* see;" and he put his hand out to her mantle.

She did not move; he drew it out of her arms, and shook it out: there fell from it only glorious white and red roses, and jessamines in fragrant bunches, and lay in a lovely heap on the pure white of a snow-drift, where they had dropped.

The Landgrave stooped in astonishment, and picked them up; he looked at his gentle wife,—and his eyes were riveted there. Above her

head shone against the dusky heavens a pale silvery cross of light : it was not of fire, but like a gentle moonbeam, so soft was it and pure.

Though this after all is but a *legend* of olden times, yet it contains a lesson for us all. This cross stood over one in whom the childlike JESUS dwelt,—in whose heart He lay cradled : for we know that He taketh up His abode in and with man, and charity is the cradle He rests most lovingly in.





## The Sacrifice of Chichen-itza.

A.D. 1552.



ANCY to yourself a still, sweet evening, in the far-off Yucatan, a country near Mexico, extending into the great Mexican Gulf, washed by the sea on all sides but that which joins Guatemala.

The day had been hot, and the sun was now dipping lower and lower, till it hung, a red globe, over the horizon.

There was the greyness of twilight just stealing over the clear blue overhead, and dulling its mid-day resplendency. In the east, where there were a few hills on the horizon, all was deep purple; but over the west, a haze of glory still hung about the departing sun, and streamed over the billowy forest, which rolled in the cool evening breeze,—the leaves clattering, and sending up a balmy fragrance into the city of Chichen-itza.

The streets of the town were broad, but the

houses, for the most part, mean, and roofed only with reeds. Here and there, however, on broad terraces, rose magnificent palaces, presenting long façades of sculptured stone, pierced with numerous doors. Here and there, also, were huge pyramids of earth and stone, with temples on their summits, and grand stairs leading to them, guarded by monstrous serpents in stone. In some places, before the palaces grew sapote trees, with seats round their immense trunks, where the inhabitants were already lounging in the cool.

On the top of one of the pyramids stood a slender boy, of about seventeen years of age, with large dark eyes, fixed sadly on the departing sun. His face was of the usual Astek type: the forehead rather retreating, and the nose curved; yet there was something strikingly beautiful in his countenance: for the eyes were full of a bold, noble expression, and manly vigour. He saw the grey evening closing faster in over the forest, and he watched the bathers returning from the senote, or artificial pool, just outside the town, and he saw workmen hanging gorgeous carpets of birds' plumes and gold embroidery about a quadrangular inclosed place before him, surrounded by rows of low, upright stones.

"Oh, mother!" said the boy, turning to an old woman near him, "Look at them gilding the poison cup!"

"If the great Texcatlepoca requires thee, child," replied she, "thou should'st not repine."

"I do not repine, mother," said the boy, "at least, I fear not death; but why should Texcatlepoca require so much blood to satisfy him? Look there! do you see the golden sun setting? What does it burn for, but to give us light and warmth? Look at the woods! what do the trees grow for, but to give us cool shade, and to harbour the beautiful birds? Why are there birds and beasts at all, mother, but that we may have them for our food? Ah! all is arranged by kind gods for our comfort and benefit: wherefore, then, do they require us to be killed, and to have our hearts torn out by the priests? The gods never willed it, mother! I have thought over it here, and I tell you that the religion which desires blood and fire is false."

"O Maxtle, what art thou saying?" cried his mother, in astonishment. "Do not blaspheme the gods."

"Texcatlepoca is no god,—he is a lie!" exclaimed Maxtle, stamping his foot on the ground. "Look how the twilight is deepening in; is not that another proof that the gods must be benevolent? for man could not live without sleep."

"My boy, think what a grand thing it will be for thee to-morrow to stand here at the foot of this mound, with flowers twined round thy head and neck, in the sight of all the people of Chichen,—the chosen sacrifice of Texcatlepoca."

"Ay, think of that! does not that move your mother's heart?" exclaimed the boy, vehemently. "Think of the black priests, their hands covered with blood, tying me to the stake;

then with their knives cutting open my breast and tearing out my still palpitating heart, before the dimness of death has come over me, and flinging it at the feet of the god Texcatlepoca."

"Maxtle!" cried his mother, throwing herself upon his neck, and bursting into tears, "do not speak of it, my son; it *must* be; there is no escape. Try to think of the glory; I cannot bear the reality."

"That is true, mother," said the boy; "but what is real has been before me for many a month, and I know that Texcatlepoca is a lie. See here!"

And turning round to where a hideous statue of the god stood, he mounted on the step before it, and struck it on the face with all his force.

"He can neither move nor answer, mother: is that like a god?"

"Oh Maxtle, my child!" cried his mother, beating her breast, "All I have had to console me has been the thought of the god having chosen thee; but if he is no god at all, what have I to hope? All is black and void to me."

"All is black and void, mother, like this night which is coming on. Is there no hope, mother? There will be no light in this dark night, either: on one a morning will break,—on the other, none."

He paused for a moment, and watched the last spark of the sun sink behind the leafy horizon. Then he clasped his hands over his eyes, and the tears forced themselves between his fingers, "Oh, mother! that is the last sunset I

shall ever see. To-morrow the morning will break, but I shall never see the evening blush herself to sleep in the west again, but must remain for ever in blackness and night, without a thought—without a memory. A sleep, mother, without a dream even: is not that horrible?"

The poor woman sobbed bitterly. All her fortitude had left her; and mother and son clung to each other sobbing. Then he tore himself away, and rushed to the temple. "Farewell for ever, mother," he said, and vanished within the doorway.

No, Maxtle, not for ever! Rescue is at hand, thou shalt cry out, joyfully, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!"

Where think you he could expect rescue from? There were hundreds of men in Chichen-Itza who could stand out against any attacking army for some while. No: help cometh not from princes, or any child of man; but at dawn next morning we shall see rescue at hand, in one coming through the forest.

Yes, only one, and he an old man, unarmed, save with his little black cross; unharnessed, save with the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation; unguarded, save by legions of angels.

Watch him with me, a little while, as he walks sturdily through the forest. He has on a brown dress and hood, thrown back over his shoulders, so that his fine head is bare. His hair is very grizzled; his eyes grey; his face pale, and worn with fatigue and fasting. There is the same

elevated expression in it as in that of Maxtle; but in him it is intensified into a glorious look of holy earnestness and zeal. His right hand grasps a tough stick; in his left is a Psalter; and as he wanders on, he chants some of David's beautiful Psalms, in a low voice, to himself. On either side of his path are thick dingles of the scrubby wild palm; and then come groves of elm. Now and then, also, a giant sapote tree stands out, with its broad branches spreading wide around, and sheltering numerous birds. As Father Landa passes, they set up a loud chirping and chattering, and the white-crowned parrot, with its glittering feathers, screams at him, or the blue-headed mot-mot, with its long light-green tail, darts across the road. Gradually the forest begins to thin, and the good father meets an Indian coming out of the town and striking through the wood to the senote. The old man asks whether he is near Chichen-Itza.

"It is at hand,—but a few steps further. Dost thou go to the sacrifice?" replies the Indian, staring at the stranger's garb and face.

"What feast?"

"That of Texcatlepoca," answers the Indian. "There is a youth about to be sacrificed to the great God: so make haste, if thou wouldst see the offering."

The Priest sighs, and walks on faster.

In the meantime all in the city was prepared for the great sacrifice; at the bottom of the pyramid was a stake driven into the ground,

and at the top, the great idol garlanded with flowers.

Every where round was a sea of heads ; these were the Astek chiefs in their gorgeous robes covered with gilded buttons, and having elaborate head-dresses of the most brilliant coloured plumes, which hung down behind them as low as the ground, the ends of the feathers being fastened to the quills of others with bright ribands interwoven with them to conceal the joining. Some had their weapons in their hands, more for show than for use, clubs with sharp stones stuck through them, so as to protrude in two places, and knives in their girdles. There were the wilder inhabitants of the interior and from Lake Paten ; there were also the dark priests in long black robes clotted with human gore, sharp stone knives in their bosoms, the stained handles showing, their dishevelled locks flowing about their faces. Among these last was Maxtle, pale, his large dark eyes fixed firmly on the sky, his lips tightly compressed ; once he caught his mother's anxious eye among the crowd, and then he nearly gave way, but hastily turning his face aside, walked steadily to the place of sacrifice.

The sun was nearly vertical, the gilded doors of the temple on the pyramid flashed like fire, and there was no shadow cast by the mound. Right in front of it the priests bound Maxtle to the stake, tying his hands behind him and lashing them to the post, so as to make his breast bare for the sacrificial knife. The wreaths of

flowers on his head and shoulders fluttered in a soft wind which blew upon him, wavering the slight locks of dark hair which strayed beneath the garland.

When the sun stood in the middle of its course, the priests set up a yell and sung a wild discordant chant while standing about the victim. The high priest flung back his sleeves, drew out his stone knife, and sprang on the stone before Maxtle. "O, Texcatlepoca! soul of the world! do thou receive the victim thou demandest," he cried, and brandished the blade over the boy's head.

One sharp bitter cry issued from among the crowd. Maxtle winced, and a great tear stole down his cheek. There was a wavering in the line of priests in front:—the boy looked up at the sun to take his last long look, and saw the flash of the knife,—at that instant a hand thrust back the high priest, and sent him staggering off the stone, and Maxtle a moment after found his hands unbound.

Father Landa stood there, he had pushed his way through the crowd, and cut the thong which bound the boy's arms;—priests and people, all stood rooted to the spot in speechless astonishment.

Father Landa saw that the moment was not to be lost, he seized all the sacrificial weapons and utensils, and dashed them to pieces on the ground. "Help me," he said to Maxtle in his own tongue, and both sprang up the steps of the pyramid. At the top stood, as I said before,

a statue of the foul god smeared with blood ; the priest leaned against it, and tried to force it over the edge. Maxtle helped him with all his might, and the god fell with a crash, bounding down the side, and, hitting one of the great serpents at the foot of the stairs, the head of the idol snapped off, and it lay a broken mass beside the stake. The priest dropped on his knees for a moment, and prayed for strength ; the whole of the space before him was filled with a swaying crowd of people, and he expected that the next moment they would rush on and tear him to pieces.

Then rising from his feet, he motioned Maxtle to escape if he could, and then darted down the stairs : Maxtle followed him.

Father Landa planted himself on a step which just raised him above the heads of the people, and cried out in their own tongue,—

“These be your gods! helpless pieces of stone, they are broken and cannot mend themselves, and yet they cry for the blood of your sons and your daughters.

“The good SPIRIT who made the blue sky and the flower-growing earth, Who prepareth fruit on the trees, Who stretcheth the waters round the land, Who breathed into His people the breath of life, He I tell you hath conquered the bad and cruel gods who bring disease and war and death. The Good God loveth life and beauty, the evil one desireth cruel sacrifices.

“Turn ye then, turn ye, my people, to the

good SPIRIT, Whose sign this is,"—and high above his head he raised the sacred cross he wore.

"Leave the bloody worship of the conquered Texcatlepoca, and come to the victor JESUS, Who willeth not murders, and lusteth not for blood; His pleasure is a spotless life, a life of pure love without sin. Come then, my sons, choose ye your gods, the conquered or the Conqueror!"

There was a hush of a moment, then the whole crowd shouted as one man,—“The good GOD, the white GOD.”

“Then let us cleanse this unclean temple,” cried Father Landa, “Follow me.”

Up and after him poured the people, and rushed with him into the hideous temple, which from below resembled the head of Texcatlepoca, the door being fashioned to represent a mouth armed with great teeth.

It was a sickening sight they beheld, on entering within the walls; piles of skulls were raised against them, the floor and walls were dabbled with blood, and here and there was the awful mark of the “red hand” on the plaster.

In an inner chamber were heaps of dried and withered hearts.

“See!” cried Father Diego de Landa, “one after another have your children been torn from you to feed this vile god, rejoice with me that he is cast out, and that the days of human murders are at an end for ever.”

With one heart the people assisted him in

cleansing the temple of its abominations ; water was brought up from the senote, and the blood stains effaced, the hideous paintings on the walls were erased, and a few days after saw a bright golden cross gleaming over the entrance to the temple of Texcatlepoca, and that was not all ; within, an Altar of hewn stone, and a sweet cloud of incense stealing out of the door, and lost in the balmy air which breathed up from the forest.







## The Eve of S. Michael.

A.D. 1548.



AR away from Spain with its grey old Churches endeared by many a memory, far from its oranges and sweet balmy breezes, far from its rugged sierras grey in the morning and flushed at sundown, far across the wide blue sea twinkling in the sun, far, far as GOD has any land, there GOD's loving hearts will wander to bring fellow-hearts to Him. Just think of the struggle it must cost, not only to give up father, mother, possessions, but to resign also the sight of dear home scenes, sweet home sounds, the tinkle of the sheep bell, the toll of the Angelus at noon, the wave-like swell of the chant in the chapel; think of the struggle to the good Spanish priest, to tear himself away from all these, and to cross that weary-long ocean, never, never to return: is not that self-sacrifice? Many an one has done it though,—that is the way they have won

Heaven ; how different to the way you intend gaining it ! with prospects before you of living in a comfortable home, with a snug fireside, surrounded by dear relations.

What a vastly higher place their's will be than your's, in the many mansions of Heaven, who have sold *all* that they had, life, friends, home, and bought but one treasure, the Pearl of great price,—JESUS.

It is of two Spanish missionaries I am going to tell you, far away in Yucatan, a long while ago when the only Christian settlements were on the coast.

In the heart of the peninsula was a village called M<sup>a</sup>ni, and hither, bare-footed, staff in hand, had Fathers Villalpando and Benavente come, through thick-tangled forests.

This large building, behind which a huge mahogany tree is growing, is the principal cacique's palace ; the chambers you will observe all open out on the broad terrace before it, and the only light in the rooms enters through these doors : notice the quaint devices on the façade seemingly intended to represent a huge serpent coiling the length of the building among heaps of skulls, feathers, and strange hieroglyphics. This edifice on the left is a temple, the front is more simply ornamented with a pattern resembling palings ; there is a flight of steps up to it also. You may see several smaller buildings with pretentious exteriors richly sculptured, many of them of wood, but some of glistening white stone. There among the trees is one

little building which somehow gives one a home thought directly the eye catches it. There is a pointed roof to it, perhaps that is one reason, but the chief one is the wooden cross above one gable, and the rude bell-cot at the other end. One might know at a glance that European hands had raised it. There it stands with its home look, a wooden structure thatched with broad maize leaves, before the forest which rises behind it like a green wave. There are numbers of black-headed jays with long blue tails darting in and out, screaming among the elms and campeachy trees, and a chattering white-crowned parrot, in its harlequin garb, is nodding on the ridge of the little building.

Do you notice a narrow path among those rocks? it passes close under that huge aloe with its towering yellow flower-shoot; it dives across a patch of ground with rank grass, breast high; then enters the forest by a mahogany tree of great age, whose arms form little gardens of fern and balsam. That path goes on to a rock whose top is crowned by an elm which has twisted its roots round it in all directions, driving them into every fissure, clasping every protruding piece, knotting over every level surface, till it is encased as in a network.

Beneath this rock opens a gloomy cave, and when anyone looks in, he feels a cold, keen blast come up from dismal depths. There is a green lizard on the stone now, its back glitters in the sun; a large gold and blue butterfly noiselessly flutters round, wheeling here and

there; now a wild bee drones slowly by. Presently a slight breeze flickers the topmost leaves of the forest, and the gold network on the ground glides about, one patch of yellow flowing into another, a large one melting into twenty fragments, and thus running together again.

All at once the lizard darts away; from under the elm above the rock rises a small, dark face. It is Sebastian, a little Indian boy, who has gone to sleep there, he wakens, rub his eyes, and lies down again.

"It is not time for me to go and be catechized yet," says he to himself; "I will lie here a little longer."

He had been a heathen; but, a few days before, his mother had brought him to Father Villalpando and had him baptized, when the priest had given him the name of Sebastian.

The little boy did not remain there much longer before he heard the steps of several men coming along the path below the rock. He was too lazy to raise his head and see who they were, so he remained quietly on his back looking up into the green boughs of the elm already beginning to golden with autumn.

"This is the place," said a man, whose voice he recognised as that of the principal cacique or chief in the place, "Zuma, where are the priests?"

"They are just behind yon tree," replied the other; and as he spoke, two hideous beings in long black robes girded about their waists with blood-stained sashes, emerged from the wood.

"Have you got the lights, Xicolencatl?" asked the cacique.

"Here, my lord," answered the dependant.

"I have called together a body of people," said the cacique, to one of the priests, "by the time we return with the answer of the God they will be ready for us."

"Good, good," said both the priests, and going to the mouth of the cave they stooped and looked in, the blast was violent enough to raise and flap their matted locks.

"You must light the torches within," said one of them, "they would be blown out at the mouth."

"Place the victim between us," said the other, "fasten one rope to my arm, the other to yours."

"It is useless, I cannot escape;" exclaimed a young man who was bound with his arms behind his back.

Sebastian peered over the edge of the rock, and saw about half-a-dozen of the principal people of Màni assembled at its foot.

"Now," said the cacique, "lead on, we follow."

The boy saw one of the priests creep in at the mouth, dragging the young man after him; the other priest followed, and then the chief and the remainder of the party.

Sebastian's first thought was to get up and run away, but his curiosity got the better of him, and he remained.

From the mouth of the cave a ladder of poles tied together led down a sort of well. The only

light entered through the gap, and that was so feeble that it only served to light up that part of the gulf round the opening, with a grey twilight.

The Indians went on in perfect darkness, feeling the way with their feet, at length the foremost priest paused and struck a light. In a moment his torch flared up, and allowed him to see another ladder fixed against the ledge he had rested on, and descending still.

Down they went, all in silence ; at last the priest left the ladder and walked out on firm ground, holding up the torch for others to see, but it flickered so in the draught which passed through the cavern, that he was obliged to shelter it behind himself.

When all had reached the bottom, the cacique and some others lighted their torches from that of the priest.

Before them the soil was even, except in one corner where it descended to a little pool of dull red water. The priest made them each drink of this, and then he led them through a side fissure in the cavern ; here the wind blew with such violence that all the torches but one were put out. For some distance they went on, but gradually the ground began to descend, great drops of moisture hung from the roof, in some places long thin hairs of a species of white salt had formed and filled hollows in the rock. Now the ground beneath their feet grew sloppy with mud, now hard again, and the sides of the vault were encrusted with stalactite.

All at once the priest stood still, the passage had widened into a spacious cave, on the opposite side of which a similar passage to that they had entered by went on into the heart of the rock, but between them and it the ground sunk some feet to the mouth of a hideous gulf, which plunged sheer down to unknown depths. The party descended to this cautiously; the priests having re-lit their torches, which burned now more steadily, the blast of cold air passing above them.

Of their own accord all kept perfect silence, a great drop fell from the roof past them down the abyss, but they never heard it reach the bottom; there was a sort of rustling sound in the pit, and as one of the priests held his torch high in the air over it, some saw dark things like large bats darting to and fro, below them. Above them they heard the moan of the wind in the passages.

"Look over," said the priest, to the young man with his arms bound.

The youth's face was cold and grey; he stooped forward and looked down.

"What do you see?" asked the priest, extending his torch.

"Black shadows flitting here and there," he answered, in a trembling voice.

"What more?" asked the priest again: the young man drew suddenly back, his flesh creeping.

"Two small red eyes staring up at me!" he gasped.

"Stoop," said the priest in a husky voice, putting down his torch ; he did so, but a shudder that shook his whole frame passed over him.

The priest suddenly drew the itztli or stone knife from his girdle, and shrieking out, "O Huitzilopotchli, great god ! receive the victim we offer thee," dashed it into the back of the youth, and with the blow sent him headlong down.

There was not a stir among the Indians, they heard the body strike the rocks on one side, then rebound and strike further down on the other side,—again,—but fainter,—once more ; but fainter still,—then—before they heard another blow, there issued suddenly from the pit a gasp—so loud that it made each start back from the edge : and then a voice, more like the howl of a beast than that of a man, rushed up from below, uttering a few words in the Azteclanguage.

Whether the Devil had greater power in countries where the faith was not spread, or whether the priests used jugglery to deceive the people, I know not, but I incline to the former opinion.

Silent and trembling the Indians returned towards the light of day.

It is the eve of S. Michael ; the Angel who overcame the Prince of Darkness,—perhaps he will fight for the light against him this eve ; we shall see.

Sebastian had in the mean time grown tired of waiting, and was just on the point of sauntering home, when he heard voices under the rock, and looking over, saw the Indians coming one by one out of the cave.

"I have decided in my mind, Xicolencatl," said the cacique, "we will surround the Thocallis of the white priests this night, and burn them down."

"Can you keep the rumour of it from them? if they hear of it they may escape," said an Indian.

"What if they do?" exclaimed the chief, "they can only go back through the woods to their brother fire-eaters beyond Uxmal."

"When the night is at the middle of its course," said one of the priests, "when, looking from the temple, the moon will be standing just over the three banana trees, then let the house be fired."

"And I shall give orders that should the white men endeavour to escape, they be cast back into the flames," said the cacique.

"Good!" exclaimed the other priest, "a good offering to Huitzilopotchli."

The cacique added something, but Sebastian heard no more, as he and those with him had entered the forest.

The child waited but a few minutes, and then stole away towards the Christian Church. It was just the time which Father Villalpando had appointed for catechizing him, so that the good priest was not surprised to see him enter.

The fathers lived in a little room adjoining the Church, but it was in the latter that they held their catechizings.

"Now, Sebastian," said the father, drawing the child towards him and making him stand by

his knee, "I talked to you last time about what is to be done in life, and your duties in it, they were to keep——"

"The commandments," interrupted the boy.

"Whose commands?" asked the priest.

"God's," replied the child; "they are to love Him, and to love all about us."

"Quite right," said Father Villalpando, "now tell me what comes after life."

"Death," answered Sebastian, readily.

"Well, that is what I am going to catechize you on to-day; do all men die?"

"Yes," replied the little Indian, "dogs, birds, and all, trees and flowers too."

"Now," continued the priest, "it is a very dreadful thing for some to die, who have not known or served God, as I told you last time, during their lives, for they go to dreadful punishments: but to the good, or to those who try hard to be good, God has a glorious home ready, much more beautiful than any of this land, more splendid trees, a clear shining river, and no night at all, nor any burning sun: I cannot tell you all the glories of that place."

"Are you going there, priest?" asked Sebastian.

"I hope so, my little boy," he answered.

"Well, then," continued the child, "tell me, is it a good thing to die, better than to live?"

"No," replied Father Villalpando, "for life is what God gives us in love; death is a punishment for our wickedness, which He sends us."

"Then, father," said Sebastian, "you must fly

away from here, for the caciques and priests are going to burn you and the Church to-night, just before the moon goes down."

"We cannot fly from hence," said the priest, "where should we be safer? they might easily overtake us in the woods; but here we have our flock, and we must live and die among them. If God wishes us to go on sowing the seed of His Word here, He will send His Angels, whose feast we are now about commencing, and they will fight for us."

The little boy began to cry.

"Fear not," said the priest, gently, "come to-morrow morning to service, and you shall see us."

"No, no," sobbed Sebastian, throwing his arms round Villalpando, "I shall never, never see you again."

"Leave us, now, dear child," said the good father, "Brother Benavente and I must prepare ourselves for the coming trial;" and he gently forced the boy out of the Church.

The other priest had been near, and had heard all that had passed; when Villalpando came to him, he was pale with fear.

"O let us fly!" said he, "we have no right to remain here and be burned to death."

"Nay," answered the other, "do not let fear overcome you, our duty is to remain, if we leave this place when we have already gained many souls to CHRIST, what are they to do? God can deliver us easily out of the hands of our enemies."

"But—but—" faltered Benavente.

"Remember it is S. Michael's eve," said

Father Villalpando, "does not the story of Elisha and his servant come to your memory, how the city he was in was defended from the Assyrians by armies of Angels?"

"True, true, I have so little faith, brother," sighed Benavente, "let us kneel down at once."

So the two priests knelt before the altar and committed their souls and bodies to God's safe keeping. And then retiring to their little room they ate their evening meal cheerfully.

In the mean time the sun set.

From many a convent quire in Spain, and from many a chancel stall in England, that night there went up to God the beautiful prayer—"O everlasting God, Who hast ordained and constituted the services of Angels and men in a wonderful order; mercifully grant, that as Thy holy Angels always do Thee service in Heaven, so by Thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth:" and the sweet 'Amen' to that petition chimed slowly through the cells of many a cathedral's vaulted roof.

Here in Yucatan these poor priests said it too.

Night deepened in: the pale crescent of the moon hung in the sky like a bright sail to some celestial boat skimming over the deep, deep skies.

Slowly the moon sailed downward, and in its wake, every now and then a fresh star twinkled in through the windows of the Church. The only sound wafted in there to the kneeling priests was the sigh of the breeze in the forest. Now a little spot of white is formed on the

floor, now it steals eastward in a streak, now it pauses and climbs the altar, now it lights up the silver cross, the only treasure the little Church possesses.

Hark! a hoarse shout, and in the still night air comes the sound of advancing feet. Now through the Church windows flashes the yellow light of torches, the stems of the elms and cacao trees stand out in the glare against a background of dusky leaves. The birds alarmed, awake and flutter about screaming.

Like a flood, the tide of Indians comes on and pours round the Church; shouts ring through the sacred place, dark heads appear at the windows; up on each other's shoulders crowd the natives to peep through the windows at the kneeling priests.

Women yell, parrots screech, all is uproar.

"Look, look!" cried one of the Indians pointing through the window.

"Look!" cries another, on the other side of the Church.

"Now, the door," shouts the cacique, "burn it open."

"But look at them," exclaims Zuma.

"Fool! the torch," says the chief.

In a moment a flame is applied to the door.

"Away with it," cries a priest, kicking the torch aside, "do you not see that it is iron wood, and will not burn?"

An Indian flings a lighted faggot through one of the windows into the Church; it smoulders on the ground, and then goes out.

"Burst open the door!" shout three or four ; and in a moment it is done.

"Go on," exclaims the cacique, from behind, "bring the priests out."

"But look !" cry some of the Indians, "they will not come to meet us, they are turned to stone."

"Look at the cross," shouts another.

"Why do they not move ?" cries a third, "they are about some witchcraft."

"Fetch them out, some one," again yells the chief, "burn the whole place down."

A torch is flung up on the roof, but owing to the rapid slope it rolls off the thatch without igniting it, and in a moment is trampled out by the mob.

In the meanwhile the two fathers remain kneeling before the altar absorbed in their prayers, the cross is gleaming out in the pure moonlight before them.

"Some go in," shouts the cacique, furiously.

A man darts forward, his foot is entangled in the bell-rope, and he falls prostrate, jangling the bell as he does so.

Instantly the whole mob draws back.

"What are they doing ?" asks one.

"They are at their incantations," says another, "their God is going to defend them."

"I cannot go on," exclaims a third.

"Let me pass," thunders the cacique ; but the mob is so dense, some going forward, some turning back, that he can hardly get on.

"They do not fear us," says an Indian, "what have they got to protect them ?"

"Fling something at them," says another.

"I cannot, there is no room to move an arm in this crowd."

"Let me by," shouts the chief, pushing the others aside, and striding in at the door: he stumbles over the fallen man, and, in putting out his hands to save himself, he clutches the bell-rope, and the bell rings violently in his efforts to get up again.

The sound peals out, and a sudden lull in the shouting ensues.

"My lord, hark!" shouts an Indian, as suddenly over the forest comes the bang of a gun. "The fire-eaters!"

"The white men are upon us," shout several of the crowd; "they will strike us with lightning."

"Let us run," shout others.

Now I must explain to you how this happened.

A body of Spanish soldiers were on their march to Paten from Merida, in order to quell a disturbance among the natives there.

"It is very odd," said Joachim, a guide, "but I would be sworn I knew the way, and yet—"

"What now?" asked Caudillo, the leader of the band; "Are we out of the road?"

"Not as right as we might be, Senhor," answered the guide, "I know the road well enough, yet somehow——"

"Your knowledge is at fault," interrupted the captain, "There was a turn on the right some way back."

"No, that was not it, I noted it," said Joachim; "It must be further still, yet I know not where this road leads to, unless it be direct to Paten; here—this hollow, I never remember it," and the guide began to rub his head.

"We must push on anyhow," observed Caudillo, "the sun has set already."

"Hold, Senhor!" exclaimed Joachim, who had been looking suspiciously about him; and leaping from his horse, he darted among the trees.

The soldiers heard him shout, and Caudillo sent one of them to him, but he reappeared directly, dragging an Indian by the arm; "I thought I saw the copper rascal behind those agaves," said he, laughing, and then he added in the Astec language, "Now then, fellow, tell us, is this the way to Paten?"

The man nodded, and pointed along the road.

"Come along with us," cried Caudillo, "If the dingy villain is misguiding us, we can shoot him down, tell him so, Joachim."

"Now run on before," said the Spanish guide, "and mind you, copper-skin, if you lead us wrong, I'll send lightning into you;" and he aimed his gun at the Indian's head.

"Look at the fellow's head-dress!" said the captain, turning to an officer behind, "I told you, Senhor Alvarès, what wonderful skill they had in feather-work. Those plumes hang to ground, if it were daylight, you might see how they shine, far grander than any jewels, to my poor thinking."

"There must be gorgeous birds in these woods

to produce such feathers," observed the young man.

"Ay, there are," said Caudillo; and the cavalcade advanced.

The night began to pass, and yet they came near no inhabited place of any kind.

"We are quite out," said Joachim, "I know this is not the Paten road."

"Speak to the fellow, will you?" growled Caudillo; the Indian when asked about it, held up two fingers, and explained that there were two ways, and that he was leading them the shortest. Joachim shook his head, however, and looked at the stars.

"We are making a wonderful bend in the way, by Sant-Iago!" he exclaimed.

There was a pause for some while, no one feeling in a mood to talk; the moon began to dip over the trees.

"I wish we were coming to some inhabited place," muttered Don Alvarès at length, "this brute of mine does nothing but stumble."

"If we come to no houses before the moon sets," said Caudillo, "we must bivouac in this forest, I have been in worse places in my time."

"It will be down in half an hour, let us tether up the horses now, senhor," said Joachim.

"One would not mind so much, were it not for the mosquitoes; break me off a small branch, Picaro; Muerte!—I shall get bitten to death by them!" exclaimed Don Alvarès.

"Hark! Hark!" suddenly exclaimed the guide, and at the same moment the whole party

heard the violent clanging of a bell come sweeping over the forest.

"Ride on! By San Miguel, there's Spanish souls there," cried Caudillo cheerfully.

"Now, friend," said Joachim, riding up alongside of the Indian, "What place is that?"

"Paten," answered he shortly.

"It is not," shouted Joachim, bringing a whip he had in his hand across the Indian's shoulders, "Hark!—there's the bell again!"

The soldiers reined in their horses.

"Vilely rung it is too;—but by all the Saints!" shouted Caudillo, suddenly, "mind the savage!" Joachim looked round, and saw the man darting off among the trees. He raised his gun and fired.

"Missed him," he exclaimed with a curse, throwing back his gun; "I'd have given something to have brought down that ugly thief with his feather cap."

"Well, push on fast," said Caudillo, "there is no help for it now."

That was the shot which had been heard in Màni, and no sooner did the Indians hear it than they fled.

Half an hour later the clatter of hoofs sounded in the place, and the party drew up before the church door.

How joyfully they were received by the two priests, I need not tell you. The horses were speedily ungirthed, and just as a grey streak of dawn began to light up the east, all the soldiers united with Fathers Villalpando and Benavente in chanting a 'Te Deum' of joy at the deliverance.

"And how far is this from Paten?" asked Caudillo, after the service.

"This is M<sup>a</sup>ni," answered Villalpando. "It is some fifteen or sixteen leagues west of Paten."

"Well, I shall not regret the mistake," said the captain, "since we have saved your lives by it."

The Fathers prepared the best meal they were able, and left the band to take some rest, Bena-vente going to ring the bell, and Villalpando to prepare the altar for morning celebration.

"We shall have no congregation to-day," said the latter.

"I fear not," replied the other pulling the bell-rope. However, they were partly mistaken, for in strolled Sebastian, his face shining with delight at finding his friends alive. He informed them that the Indians had fled from the village to the hills, from fear of the Spaniards.

In the cool of the evening Caudillo rode off with his company, having promised to send an account of the affair to the Adelantado at Merida; and some days after, a troop came with orders to arrest as many as were engaged in the attempt.

Seven-and-twenty of the ringleaders were seized, the cacique, Zuma, Xicolencatl being among them, and were hurried off to Merida.

"I am not going to remain here now," said Villalpando to his brother priest, "Do you look after our little flock; I intend a journey to Merida, to save these poor men."

"It will fare badly with them," said Bena-

vente ; " I know what sort of a governor Montejo is, fire and sword are his law."

" Fare you well then, the sooner I go the better." And Villalpando started on his way with a light heart.

Merida was a Spanish looking town, the houses had an European appearance, they had square windows, and were all new and glittering in the sun ; here and there were foundations of unfinished buildings, there was a stone church with round windows, having a low tower which was intended to have a dome on it ; a great crimson and white awning was over the door. The Adelantado's house had the Spanish banner drooping from the roof ; there was not breath enough astir to keep it unfolded, though now and then a cool breeze from off the vividly blue sea fluttered it hastily, and then let it droop again. There were green blinds to all the windows, spread outward by means of a couple of sticks, so as to exclude the sun but not the air. Next the governor's palace, a gambling house, the lower story of stone, but the upper one of wood painted white. Between it and the next house, which was only partly built, appeared the masts of the ships, the Spanish eagle at their heads ; there was a large wooden bazar or market-house stored with fruit, the banana, huge golden heads of maize in heaps, baskets of cacao, vanilla pods ; jars of pulque, the fermented juice of the agave ; large figures of feather-work brighter than any painting, native cloths dyed with cocheneal and logwood ; vases, weapons, and carved wooden implements.

The houses were built so as to form a large square, the Adelantado's house being in the centre of one side.

There was evidently some great cause of excitement in the place, for men and women were thronging the Plazza, on one side a large awning had been spread, and under it some of the most influential people in the place were seated.

In the middle of the square was a huge pile of logs heaped round twenty-seven posts, to which chains were fixed.

"It did not take long condemning the blood-thirsty villains," said Montejo, as he took his place in the centre under the awning. "I thought the faggot the best punishment for them."

"And a great deal too easy an one," remarked Don Azevedo, a fine old Spaniard who sat near.

"One must make an example, senhor," said the Adelantado, "I am glad the disturbance at Paten came to nothing; so, Caudillo! you had no work for your men after all."

"But little, your Excellency," replied the officer.

"I shall not pardon your winning forty pieces of gold from me last night," said Azevedo, touching the governor, "you must play with me again to-night, and let me have a chance of retrieving my loss."

"As you like, senhor," replied Montejo, smiling, "And if I lose, you must give me a chance again."

"Look at the villains!" said Caudillo to Don

Alvarès, who stood by him; "does it not do your heart good to see the crafty knaves there?" The young Spaniard laughed.

All eyes were now turned on the Indians, who walked proudly along, the cacique heading them. "Why they are brave looking fellows," said Caudillo.

"What a shout!" exclaimed Alvarès, as a yell rose from the people; "and yet they hardly seem to hear it, what a grand walk they have, by Sant-Iago, one would think they were kings of the soil still!"

The Indians were one by one fastened to the stakes, with the chains about their waists: the governor's word was only awaited to fire the pile.

"How is the Donna Maria?" asked Azevedo of Montejo, "I am surprised not to see the senhora here."

"I fear she had a slight sun-stroke the day of the bull-fight," replied the governor; "she has been unwell ever since; shall I give the word, senhor?"

"As your Excellency desires," replied Azevedo.

"Hold! one moment," broke in Alvarès, leaning forward, "here comes one of the Padres, I think."

"He wants to speak to your Excellency, I suppose," said Azevedo, "How dusty and tired he looks! better stop till you have heard him."

"As you like."

Father Villalpando had just arrived in time, he crossed the square, and hurrying up to the governor's seat, threw himself before him on his knees.

"I have a request to make of your Excellency," said he, "I am one of the Priests those Indians endeavoured to kill, my brother Benavente makes the same prayer through me: grant us their lives."

Montejo paused a moment, and then answered, "It is impossible, good father, an example must be made; they are condemned, the people are assembled, as you see, to witness the execution."

"Hearken to me!" exclaimed Villalpando. "I have walked all the way from Màni to gain those men's lives, they would have taken ours, then let us have our revenge on them, by forgiving them."

"No, no!" said Montejo, impatiently, "come! I shall give the word for the pile to be lighted."

"Stop! for God's sake stop!" cried the priest, "if you light that wood, I shall mount it and die with those men, thus you shall be my murderer as well as theirs, I shall go to God's throne and call His vengeance down on your head."

"Your Excellency," said Alvarès, "I see no reason why you should not grant the Padre what he asks."

"CHRIST'S Church will never take root in the land, if you do not show the fruits of the faith in mercy; we priests toil and die striving to draw the heathen to God, and you, Christian governors, with your example, undo all that ever we can teach," said Villalpando vehemently.

"I cannot release them," exclaimed Montejo; "Get you away, I shall give the sign."

"You shall burn me too!" said the priest

resolutely, "my death shall witness against your acts, that they are not after CHRIST's law," and walking away, he climbed the pile and stood by the cacique: then holding out his hand towards the Adelantado, he cried in a loud clear voice,

"Again, Montejo, I tell you, I go to accuse you before GOD for this."

"You had better pardon the fellows," whispered Azevedo, "an act of mercy may do more to pacify the natives than any severer measure."

"But there are so many of them," objected Montejo.

"The more the better," said Azevedo; "the rumour of it will spread the further."

"Well, well!" exclaimed Montejo, "I suppose I must yield to you all.—Alvarès, go and bid the mad Padre be at ease, I pardon the rascals."

The mob paused at the news, as uncertain how to act—it was only for a moment, and then there burst forth one loud pealing shout of joy: Villalpando dashed aside the captive's chains.

"Now!" cried he, "friends, back to M̀ani."

Was it any wonder that after this M̀ani became a flourishing Christian village, and that the seed sown in tears was reaped in joy?



**“ I believe in the Communion of  
Saints.”**

SING ye loud the song of triumph,  
For the victor's crown is on ;  
Shout ye the shout of victory,  
For the battle's fought and won ;  
    Raise it till it shake the sky—  
    Raise it for the saints on high ;  
    Their toil in blood is done.

All adown the dull red valley  
Have they passed beyond our sight,  
Far before, Mount Sion gleameth,  
Beaming in heaven's purest light :  
    Mark how every vineyard bower,  
    Every glittering wall and tower  
    Sparkles in radiance bright.

On !—the Church sweeps like an army ;  
“ Ever onward !” is her cry ;  
Now the foremost on the hill top  
Stand against the evening sky ;  
    Then, down Cedron's shadows grey,  
    Pass they from our sight away,  
    Beyond our watchful eye.

On ! upon the hill of Sion  
See a snow-white throne is spread ;  
There, the LAMB is laid upon it,  
There It lifts Its thorn-crowned head :  
Up as from the vale they rise,  
And the light strikes in their eyes,  
Saints to the throne are led.

On ! see how they cluster round it !  
Mary there right nobly drest,  
John—his loved head drooping, drooping,  
Full of love on that LAMB'S breast ;  
His eagle eye uplifted  
Marks the pierced hands, the rifted  
Side, he has loved the best.

Peter, with the keys of heaven  
Gains a calm triumphant seat.  
Magdalene, thy yearning love now  
Hath fulfilment deep and sweet,  
Ever and for ever there,  
Covering with your golden hair  
The LAMB'S most precious feet.

Thomas, no more fitful doubting,  
Thou to JESUS standest near ;  
Further than all others wandering  
Preaching ; now thy faith burns clear.  
The LAMB towards thee bendeth,  
His arm around thee sendeth,  
To kiss away the tear.

Andrew, who had called his brother,  
Joys, his brother being there :  
Andrew, upon his cross extended,  
Spread his quivering arms in prayer ;  
Still, wrapt in an empassioned gaze,  
He for wandering brothers prays,  
Still lifts his holy prayer.

Ye innocents by Herod slain !  
Light clouds strewn around the sun,  
Blushing in crimson as it woke ;  
Plucked before your griefs begun !  
Flutter round in child's delight,  
Your playfellow is heaven's Light,  
The carpenter's meek Son.

See! Catherine, with her broken wheel,  
Riseth towards the heavenly ray :  
Far behind, her pale foes, crouching,  
At the valley's border stay.  
Cicely in snowy dress,  
Sprinkled with each sunny tress,  
Comes singing on her way.

Lucia, with her clear eye lifted,  
Eye the foe no more can mar ;  
In her hand, her bright lamp trembling,  
Wavering, like a melting star,  
Trembling at the joy she feels,  
As before the throne she kneels,  
Beheld no more afar.

Sextus with his old head bended,  
Moves his long-served LORD to meet.  
Laurence, from his bed of roses  
With more nimble, youthful feet :  
His dalmatic o'er him thrown  
Stoops and kneels ; before the throne  
Bishop and deacon meet.

Ancient Gregory advancing,  
Throbs his heart to swell the throng ;  
Holding books of prayer and praises  
Noted with his beauteous song :  
Whispers still the Holy Dove  
Many a tender dream of love  
Into his ear, along.

Mother, weep no more your babies,  
That hope hath left you deeming ;  
O'er the wild ocean of your tears,  
CHRIST's gentle face is gleaming ;  
And each little one creeps fast  
In the Shepherd's dear arms claspt,  
Fast asleep and dreaming.

Poor child, weep no more your mother,  
She is only gone before,—  
Where her prayers have long been sighing  
In soft gales through heaven's door :  
Now she clingeth to the Altar,  
And her lips cease not, and falter  
In prayer for you no more.

Has friend more-than brother left thee ?  
Is thy poor heart near to break ?  
He is smiling down upon thee,  
Wait, be patient, and be meek :  
Thou, when JESUS bids thee die,  
With him 'neath the throne wilt lie,  
And clasp him cheek to cheek.

Think how JESUS yearned in Heaven  
To embrace his friend below ;  
Yet the boy-apostle oldened,  
And his bright locks blanched to snow,  
He waited on undying ;  
JESUS was only trying  
His deathless love to know.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sing ye the saints ! their struggles o'er  
Lift aloud the choral strain ;  
Their lonely pilgrimage complete,  
Hushed their sorrow, stilled their pain ;  
Lift th' adored Victim high,  
Bleeding doth the slain One lie,  
Among the saints, and reign.

Sing ye, and from each latticed tower  
Be the clear bell's summons flung,  
'Sing ye the birthdays of the saints !  
In their death, their life begun.'  
Moving round, with duteous feet,  
The church's walls, introits sweet  
Be in procession sung.

And, with its linen white and fair,  
Be the Altar duly spread,  
With crimson be it decked, and gold :  
When is blessed the Holy Bread,  
Let the twinkling tapers shine  
Down—into the Holy Wine  
From the LAMB's dear side shed.

Hail, blessed Host ! O gift supreme,  
That doth melt our hearts of ice ;  
As we, with souls of men redeemed,  
Gaze entranced where Thou low liest—  
All Thine Angels Thee adore,  
And Thy poor flock on the floor  
Kneel,—to the Sacrifice.

There,—in that sacrament of peace  
We unite with them again,  
And they sing, as from our bosoms,  
There is blotted each foul stain :  
Then with Angels and the just,  
And the dear ones in the dust,  
We're linked in one firm chain.



JANUARY, 1857.

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